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# **Reactions to Anarchism in the Works of Maurice Barrès and Georges Darien, 1885-1914.**

Elizabeth Brewster

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Submitted as a thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of French

University of Durham

September 2006



**Reactions to Anarchism in the works of Maurice Barrès  
and Georges Darien, 1885-1914**

**Elizabeth Brewster**

Ph.D. Thesis

Submitted to the University of Durham, September 2006.

This thesis looks at the fiction of two very different authors, Maurice Barrès (1862-1923) and Georges Darien (1862-1921). Despite their posthumous reputations (Barrès the proto-fascist, Darien the anarchist individualist), the ideological and literary development of both these writers have their roots in their reactions to anarchism. In this thesis, I examine the effect these reactions to anarchism had on their status in the *champ littéraire*, their politics and the construction of their texts.

In the opening chapter, I address the overarching issues of the nature of anarchism, political *engagement* and the *champ littéraire* of *fin-de-siècle* Paris. I refer to secondary sources such as Pierre Bourdieu, Susan Rubin Suleiman and Richard Sonn to inform my inquiry. I also establish the historical framework of this period, including Boulangism, the Dreyfus Affair, nationalism and anarchism. The second chapter examines the lives and careers of Maurice Barrès and Georges Darien in the context of the *champ littéraire*. The following chapters all examine issues which both Barrès and Darien privileged in their fiction. The writers' treatment of the self, education, crime and corruption and national identity are discussed through a detailed comparison of two texts in each chapter. This discussion takes place within the context of both authors' engagement with and reactions to anarchism. Throughout this thesis, my method is a close and comparative reading of selected passages taken from significant novels and didactic works.



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**Declaration**

This work has been submitted to the University of Durham in accordance with the regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is the author's own work, and none of it has been previously submitted to the University of Durham or any other university for a degree.

.....*EA Brewster*..... (Elizabeth Brewster)    ....*17.10.06*..... (Date)

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*Soli Deo gloria.*

## Abbreviations

The place of publication is Paris throughout this thesis unless other wise stated.

The following abbreviations are used in this thesis:

### Georges Darien

Voleurs                      *Voleurs!* (Omnibus, 1994).

### Maurice Barrès

Œuvre I/III/IV/V        *L'Œuvre des Maurice Barrès*, ed. Philippe Barrès, vols 1, 3, 4 & 5 (Club de l'honnête homme, 1965-1968).

Cahiers                    *Mes Cahiers, 1896-1923*, ed. G. Dupré (Plon, 1963).

Ennemi                    *L'Ennemi des lois* (Plon, 1927).

Colette                    *Colette Baudoche* (Plon, 1923).

## Chapter One

### Anarchism and the Written Word:

#### Maurice Barrès and Georges Darien as committed writers

'Mais sur tout je répète que mon rôle, dans cette suite de petits livres, n'est pas de prouver ou de convaincre, mais de décrire la sensibilité des personnes de ce temps qui ont la vie intérieure la plus intense et la plus ornée. Voilà ma tâche et mon plaisir ! (Ce sont deux mots qui je confondrai toujours.)' Maurice Barrès, preface to *L'Ennemi des lois*, p.vi.

'Mon livre n'est pas là. Il est tout entier dans l'étude de l'homme, il n'est point dans l'étude des milieux. Je constate les effets ; je ne recherche pas les causes. *Biribi* n'est pas un roman à thèse, c'est l'étude sincère d'un morceau de vie, d'un lambeau saignant d'existence.' Georges Darien, preface to *Biribi*, p.x.

This thesis sets out to examine the fictional works of Georges Darien (1862-1921) and Maurice Barrès (1862-1923) as reactions to the anarchist movement of the late nineteenth century. The evolution of each writer's ideological discourse wrought profound changes in their approaches to the construction of narrative, in particular the choice of narrator, and these developments in their literary approach began with their reactions to anarchism. While Darien was involved in anarchist activity for a large part of his literary career, Barrès is better known for his proto-fascist views. However, this thesis is an attempt to reassess the work of both of these authors in order to find the common influences of anarchist thought which had such differing effects on their ideological and artistic development.

This raises the issue of political commitment in literature. Jean-Paul Sartre argued that writing is a social act because its function is to communicate with others and change their perception of the world.<sup>1</sup> A committed writer focuses on

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *What is Literature?* trans. by Bernard Frechtman (London: Menthuen, 1950).



one aspect of reality and passes judgement on it.<sup>2</sup> Can we define Maurice Barrès and Georges Darien as committed writers? In what ways were they committed to giving their readers a clear vision of their ideologies through the medium of their fiction? While Barrès became a successful writer (his writing brought him both financial reward and recognition by his peers), Darien struggled to find an audience for his ideas and his sense of exile in his own country shows us the difficulties he experienced in engaging in this process. We shall see that the ideologies of Barrès and Darien affected not only the construction of their works, but also their success as writers, both in artistic and commercial terms.

The French anarchist movement of the late nineteenth century included a significant number of activists and theorists whose work combined literature, art and anarchism. While the anarchist movement of this period is particularly difficult to define, this investigation will examine those areas of the movement which could have influenced the early stages of Barrès's and Darien's careers. With reference to the work of historians such as George Woodcock and Richard Sonn and the writing of thinkers such as Tolstoy, Félix Fénéon, Stirner and others, this thesis will reveal how both Darien and Barrès were positively and negatively influenced by this strain of anarchist aestheticism, sometimes inspired by it, sometimes reacting against it.

At the heart of this study, therefore, is a search for political purpose in the works of Darien and Barrès. What elements of anarchism were filtered into their fictional works and how did their political beliefs affect the way these two men wrote their fiction? Setting the works of Barrès and Darien in the context of the literary field of the Third Republic will reveal how the politicised function

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<sup>2</sup> See M. Adereth, *Commitment in Modern French Literature, a brief study of 'littérature engagée' in the works of Péguy, Aragon and Sartre* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1967), pp.15-18.



and form of their fiction also affected the position of these two writers within the *champ littéraire*. Darien's fierce individualism led him to declare 'je suis exilé dans mon pays'<sup>3</sup>, an isolation which he felt for most of his career. Barrès, on the other hand, was able to obtain a higher level of success and respect. Pierre Bourdieu's model of the *champ littéraire* will clarify which institutions and mechanisms determine success and respect, and what parts Barrès and Darien had to play in this particular 'field of power'. Determining the positions of Barrès and Darien in the literary community of this period will provide us with a sound sociological context for their ideological fiction.

#### **'Poems and Dreams and Bombs': Reacting to anarchism<sup>4</sup>**

The reactions of Barrès and Darien to anarchist discourse and activism are at the heart of this thesis. As newcomers to Paris (Barrès arrived from Nancy as a student in 1883 and Darien after his release from the army in 1886), both of these writers came into contact with anarchist writers and activists. This contact, and their reactions to the various strains of the ideology to which they were exposed, greatly affected the way Barrès and Darien chose to begin their careers. Their reactions to anarchism also had a continued affect as they sought to clarify and determine their own ideological agenda. It is necessary to acknowledge from the outset that to seek a clear-cut definition of the rich and diverse nature of nineteenth-century anarchism is a very problematic process. It was a political movement whose adherents could be individualists, collectivists, syndicalists or communists and yet still claim to be anarchists.

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<sup>3</sup> Georges Darien, letter to Georges Pioch, May 1919.

<sup>4</sup> This phrase is taken from Richard Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin de Siècle France* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989, p.30.

There has been much debate in recent years about the nature of evolution of anarchist culture during the *fin de siècle* period. This debate provides a useful overview of the issues involved in examining the influence of anarchist thought on Barrès and Darien. What were the formative elements of anarchist culture, and which of these constitutive parts had the most profound effects on these two writers? George Woodcock and Richard Sonn take different views of the roots and the perpetuation of anarchist thought and activity and it will be useful to compare these differences and apply my conclusions to Darien and Barrès.

George Woodcock begins his survey of anarchist ideas and activities with a quotation from Sébastien Faure: 'Whoever denies authority and fights against it is an anarchist'.<sup>5</sup> Woodcock is demonstrating to the reader the problematic process which he is undertaking: a definition of anarchism. In his introduction to the book, Woodcock briefly outlines the history of anarchism, which he points out is rooted in the Greek word 'anarchos', meaning 'without a ruler'.<sup>6</sup> He then goes on to give the reader the range of anarchist beliefs and movements: these range from the individualist anarchism of Max Stirner and Godwin, through Proudhon's mutualism, collectivism, anarchist communism, anarcho-syndicalism and the ideas of Tolstoy, to the beliefs of the pacific anarchists of the twentieth century who protested against nuclear armament.

The striking difference between Woodcock's analysis of anarchism in the late nineteenth century and Richard Sonn's examination of the same period is their approach to the role of individual writers and thinkers in the development and growth of anarchist ideas. As we have seen, Woodcock represents the evolution of anarchist ideology as a succession of thinkers, from

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<sup>5</sup> As quoted by George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (London: Penguin, 1986), p.11.

<sup>6</sup> Woodcock, p.11.

Godwin to Proudhon, from Proudhon to Kropotkin and so forth. In some respects, this is a reasonable approach to anarchist thought as it allows us to make causal links and identify doctrinal developments from one work of anarchist polemic literature to the next. Sonn takes a different approach to these writers, as he focuses his study on the development of anarchist culture as a product of the working class culture of Paris at this time.

Sonn's premise is to discuss late nineteenth-century French anarchism using the discourse of *l'histoire des mentalités* or, as Robert Darton translates it, 'the new cultural history'.<sup>7</sup> While Woodcock defined anarchism as 'a doctrine which poses a criticism of society; a view of a desirable future society; and a means of passing from one to the other',<sup>8</sup> Sonn expands this definition to include the culture which both produced and expressed much anarchist ideology and action. He writes: '[m]oral, social, intellectual, and aesthetic bonds – in short, culture – made French anarchism in the 1890s something more than the expression of utopian dreams or terrorist violence.'<sup>9</sup> Sonn's vision of French anarchism of this period is of a culture that drew on the working-class language, songs and art of the faubourgs, the areas of the city outskirts which were populated by mainly working-class people. Therefore, this anarchist culture not only influenced working-class culture, but was also sustained by it. Sonn's overarching argument is that this culture produced a political discourse which was not communicated through didactic argument or reasoning, but which valued 'analogic forms of information', such as art, bombs and martyrs.<sup>10</sup> He argues that these forms of information required different kinds of responses to

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<sup>7</sup> Sonn, p.303.

<sup>8</sup> Woodcock, p.11.

<sup>9</sup> Sonn, p.2.

<sup>10</sup> Sonn, pp.2-3.

the expository, abstract message of the socialists of the day. The response amongst the working classes, the activists and the artists was a mixture of violent rebellion, organised protest and artistic innovation. Sonn believes this response gave the movement its quasi-religious status. The eclectic nature of anarchist culture during the 1890s is summed up by Sonn: 'Anarchism was not yet the strictly working-class movement toward which it would evolve as anarcho-syndicalism, but was rather a collection of marginal and *déclassé* elements of the population that could easily incorporate bohemian artists as well as tradespeople, intellectuals as well as manual workers.'<sup>11</sup>

To support his argument, Sonn refers to the topographic make-up of anarchism at this time, placing Montmartre at the heart of significant anarchist culture. While the faubourgs of the north of Paris provided much grass-roots support and the Quartier latin was a source of intellectual leadership for anarchist thought, it was Montmartre which was the 'ideal that in many ways embodied the anarchist version of utopia, not only in its championing of free creativity or local autonomy, but also in its balancing of the rural and urban elements, the gardens and the cabarets.'<sup>12</sup> A central part of the culture of anarchist Montmartre was the oral tradition which was fostered in songs, cabarets, plays, speeches and in the anarchist press. Sonn argues the widespread use of working-class slang, or *argot*, in articles in papers such as *Le Père Peinard* connected with the readers in a metacognitive way. Printed *argot* of this kind, combined with the strength of propaganda spread by word-of-mouth, created what Sonn terms a 'supraindividual consciousness'.<sup>13</sup> The articles that appeared in these papers were written in a linguistic code that communicated its

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<sup>11</sup> Sonn, p.7.

<sup>12</sup> Sonn, p.94.

<sup>13</sup> Sonn, p.112.

message to its readers not only through its content, but also through the manner in which it was written.<sup>14</sup> Darien's novels were also written in linguistic code that was used to communicate his political message to his readers in a metacognitive way. This code was not created through writing his stories in *argot*, but rather by using a first-person narrator who told the reader of his experiences, creating characters which demanded an emotional as well as an intellectual response.

Sonn's vision of anarchist culture is, therefore, a synthesis of various elements, including working class oral culture, the actions of criminals, the writings of intellectuals and the work of artists and singers. What was the role of literature in this culture? If we accept Sonn's broader interpretation of the development and perpetuation of anarchist culture, then the role of literature in synthesising oral culture and intellectual discourse must have been fundamental. As for how individual anarchist writers and thinkers viewed the role literature played in the promotion of anarchist activities and culture, there appears to have been as many views on the subject as there were writers commenting on it. However, it is reasonable to make a connection between a writer's view of the individual and his or her view of art and literature. Through reading the writings of Kropotkin, Tolstoy, Stirner and others, it is clear that those writers who promoted the supreme authority of the individual often viewed art as a personal expression of rebellion and even revolution. Those writers who argued for a

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<sup>14</sup> For example, this is an extract from an article in *Le Père Peinard* about priests which demonstrates the vitriolic power of working-class argot: 'Y a belle lurette que j'ai foutu la puce à l'oreille des bons bougres au sujet des ratichons. Que de fois j'ai rengainé : on ne parlotte pas avec la vermine noire ! On l'écrabouille comme une merde s'il y a mèche... S'il n'y a pas plan, on réchaude sa haine en attendant l'occase,... En effet, nom de dieu, y a pas à discuter avec eux : c'est des ennemis, faut les traiter comme tels ! Pardienne, si vous demandez leur avis à ces cochons là, ils vous répondront que c'est mal d'être sanguinaire. Que pour ce qui est d'eux-mêmes, ils ne cherchent que la vérité, si vous l'avez dans votre poche, ce n'est pas chouette de la garder pour vous.' *Le Père Peinard*, 22 March 1892.

collective form of revolution, resulting in a cooperative utopia often viewed art and literature as a tool to achieve this longed-for event.

Peter Kropotkin and Leo Tolstoy provide us with two examples of the latter line of thought. Although Kropotkin, as an anarchist communist, disagreed on many issues with the religious anarchism of Tolstoy, on the issue of collectivism their views converged. Kropotkin firmly believed in the inevitability of revolution which would result in the establishment of a free society. This revolution would be achieved through cooperation between workers united against the oppression of the state. In his 1885 publication, *Paroles d'un révolté*, the influential Russian stated his belief that art and literature should serve as instruments of the revolution. For Tolstoy, art was also a reflection of a collective change in society. His 1898 work, entitled *What is Art?*, was Tolstoy's examination of the function of art.<sup>15</sup> Tolstoy was an advocate of a moral revolution rather than a political upheaval, and believed that a form of universal brotherhood, based on the teachings of Christ, would follow. As a writer, Tolstoy was very aware of the role of art in expressing the ideological make-up of society. When Christian brotherly harmony flowered in society, art would naturally reflect the event: 'As soon as the religious perception, which already unconsciously directs the life of man, is consciously acknowledged, then immediately and naturally the division of art, into art for the lower and art for the upper classes, will disappear. There will be one common, brotherly, universal art.'<sup>16</sup> Tolstoy's utopia, therefore, was based on a religious collectivism, a type of spiritual harmony, and this unity was both achieved and reflected through art. Tolstoy also expounded the necessity of the writer to work

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<sup>15</sup> Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art?*, translated by Aylmer Maude (London: Archibald Constable, 1905).

<sup>16</sup> Tolstoy, p.189.

for his or her own fulfilment, echoing the work of writers such as Ruskin and William Morris: 'As soon as the author is not performing art for his own satisfaction, - does not himself feel what he wishes to express, - a resistance immediately springs up.'<sup>17</sup> Tolstoy did not promote this need for authentic self-expression in literature in order to privilege the authority of the individual over her or her responsibility to society; instead, this view of art presupposed the organic harmony of brotherhood which would evolve through the moral revolution. Tolstoy's view of art, in this context, does not promote the authority of the author or artist as supreme, but rather sets art and literature in the framework of the organic, harmonised utopia of a free society, in a similar way in which Ruskin viewed art in works such as *The Stones of Venice* (1851-3) and *Fors Clavigera* (1871-1884).<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, at the centre of anarchist debate concerning the function of art and literature was the argument concerning the individual and collectivism. For those who believed in the supremacy of the individual, art had a very different function to that articulated by Kropotkin and Tolstoy. Max Stirner was one of the earlier proponents of individualism. His 1845 work *The Ego and its Own* is an exploration of the primacy of the concerns of the individual over and above all else. He rejects all creeds, beliefs and authorities which would stifle the freedom of the individual: 'Oh! What is there which cannot be shaken off? Serfdom, sovereignty, aristocracy, princes, dominion of desires and passions, even from one's own will.'<sup>19</sup> Stirner's desire for freedom and for ownership and power over his own concerns led him to declare his hostility to everything which

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<sup>17</sup> Tolstoy, p.154.

<sup>18</sup> John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice* (London: Penguin, 2001); *Fors Clavigera* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000).

<sup>19</sup> Max Stirner, *The Ego and its Own: The Case of the Individual against Authority*, trans. by Steven Byington (London: Rebel Press, 1982), p.156.

would constrain him, and to focus on the power and creativity he searched for in himself:

God and mankind have concerned themselves for nothing, for nothing by themselves. Let me then likewise concern myself for *myself*, who am equally with God the nothing of all others, who am my all, who am the only one. [...] I am not nothing in the sense of emptiness, but I am the creative nothing, the nothing out of which I myself as creator create everything. Away, then, with every concern that is not altogether my concern! [...] Nothing is more to me than myself! [*Italics author's own*]<sup>20</sup>

While Stirner recognised that possibility of the 'egoist' joining a political party, he insisted that an individual remain autonomous and free: 'for him the party remains all the time nothing but a gathering: he is one of the party, he takes part.'<sup>21</sup> Stirner's continual reaffirmation of the uniqueness and supremacy of the individual, 'the egoist', means that his one resource is himself. From this one resource all else must be created and the individual is only responsible for and to this one consciousness. Stirner's egoism culminates in the cry: 'All is nothing to me!'<sup>22</sup>

The interpretation of the function of art in the context of individualism was discussed more explicitly in the later decades of the nineteenth century. The flourishing of anarchist culture in Montmartre and the growth in number of anarchist artists and writers was accompanied by the development of an individualist aesthetic discourse. Félix Fénéon, who knew Darien well, is an example of a writer who embraced the individualism of anarchism.<sup>23</sup> Fénéon identified the importance of aestheticism in anarchist rebellion. In his *Revue anarchiste* and the *Revue libertaire*, he strove to promote both workers' strikes and anarchist violence alongside books, art and music. His reviews of novels,

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<sup>20</sup> Stirner, pp.4-5.

<sup>21</sup> Stirner, p.238.

<sup>22</sup> Stiner, p.366.

<sup>23</sup> Fénéon's friendship with Darien is clear through his surviving correspondence with Paul Signac, as quoted by Joan Ungersma Haperin, *Félix Fénéon: Aesthete and Anarchist in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (London: Yale University Press, 1988), p.246.



poetry and art in the *Revue anarchiste* of the late 1880s and early 1890s demonstrate his belief in the supremacy of the authority of the individual over the claims of law and state and the role that artistic expression had in the representation of these political premises. In contrast to the function of art as expressed by Kropotkin in *Paroles d'un révolté*, Fénéon believed that the production of art and literature could be a revolutionary action in itself. For Fénéon, art was not a means to an end, but rather the end itself. He believed that his writing was as revolutionary as the actions of his friend, the bomber Emile Henry.

In the period of the *attentats* perpetrated by Ravachol, Henry and others, anarchism appeared to be focused on propaganda by the deed rather than the word. Indeed, as Sonn argues, many contemporary social critics of the day divided anarchists into two camps: the *impulsifs* and the *contemplatifs*.<sup>24</sup> However, the distinction between the activists and the theoreticians was not as clear-cut as this. There was a wide range of support for various forms of violence which would lead to some form of rebellion or to revolution, producing a new society. So wide was this range, that it is difficult to define any one theory of violence as particularly 'anarchist'. There was a tradition in the works of major anarchist writers of apologetics for violent rebellion, but there was no unified voice. There are clear differences between Kropotkin's revolution (a concrete event which would be produced by a group of united and purposeful workers leading to a society free of the constraints of organised political power) and Stirner's rebellion which would exalt the individual. This wide variation of opinion among anarchist writers can be witnessed in the product of the anarchist

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<sup>24</sup> Sonn, p.238.

press of late nineteenth-century Paris. Jean Grave called for propaganda by the deed in *La Révolte* (by this he meant violent acts of insurrection that would communicate and promote anarchist ideology) while Zo d'Axa promoted the act of rebellion as an end in itself in *L'Endehors*. The various theories of violence promoted by the anarchist press and the actions of terrorists such as Ravachol even had an effect on those who did not claim to be anarchist. Barrès witnessed the execution of Emile Henry in 1894 and the article he wrote on the subject clearly indicates how affected he was by this event.<sup>25</sup>

The early fictional works of Barrès and Darien clearly indicate their assessment of the function of literature in the context of anarchism. While Barrès did not call himself an anarchist, his exposure to and interaction with these ideas is evident. His 1892 novel, *L'Ennemi des lois*, is a fictive portrayal of a young journalist who is imprisoned for anarchist activity. The tone of the novel reveals that Barrès was clearly distancing himself from the violence associated with anarchism, as the narrator dismisses their effect from the outset. The fact that André Maltère, the prisoner, is a journalist rather than a bomber is also significant. The promotion of anarchist violence in the press had been criminalised and the act of writing and publishing these views had become an act of rebellion itself. The narrator's view of Maltère throughout the novel is that he admires his young protagonist's energy and will to act, but he disagrees with the views he has expressed. This is one of the main influences of anarchism on Barrès: it instilled in him an admiration for action, vitality and energy which would inform much of his theory of *le moi*. The function of literature for Barrès was an expression of this energy and will to act. Barrès was not acting as a mere

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<sup>25</sup> Barrès's article, praising the proud demeanour of Henry at his execution, was published in *Le Journal*, 22 May 1894.

individual however. His theory of the self is one which depends on a collective sense of identity, the individual acting as an extension of family, region and nation. Literature was an act not of rebellion against authority, but rather a powerful act of increasing the energy and vigour of the national identity.

Darien's interaction with anarchist discourse is much more evident in his fictional works. Through reading Darien's early novels, such as *Bas le cœurs!* (1889) and *Biribi* (1890), it is clear that he firmly favoured the individualist strain of anarchism. His narrators are oppressed, lonely individuals who are searching for freedom from the constraints of the military, from prison, from brutality, from the requirement of family and many other restrictions. Just as Stirner declared in *The Ego and its Own*, Darien's narrators are continually searching for freedom and ownership of their own lives. Darien's own attitude to political organisations reflects that of Stirner. While he was not against involvement with the anti-militarist movement or, later in his life, the Georgist movement, Darien never felt a particular loyalty to any of these organisations and always left much more easily than he joined. His early fictional works also give the reader a clear indication of his opinion of what Sonn terms anarchist 'analogic forms of information'. Just as Fénéon promoted violence alongside art and literature as legitimate acts of rebellion, so Darien viewed the written word as a medium through which he could rebel. In these works, the narrative is written using the perfect tense, with a confessional, conversational tone. For example, in *Biribi* the narrator, Jean Froisard, is a prisoner in a military discipline camp. His descriptions of his surroundings are full of exclamations and familiar language as this passage demonstrates, in which he is considering one of the officers: 'Ce n'est pas pourtant un mauvais diable, ce capitaine, gros

bonhomme toujours essoufflé, lapotant sans cesse avec son mouchoir son front qui ruisselle constamment de sueur' (Voleurs, p. 36.). While the narrator strives to remain sincere, open and honest with the reader, presenting dialogue with all its vulgarities, *Biribi* also makes it clear to the reader that Darien did not fully embrace this aspect of anarchist culture. The narration is familiar and direct, but this is not the coded slang of the articles of *Le Père Peinard*. At the end of the novel, Froissard is travelling back to Paris on the train with other released prisoners. Their dialogue is full of slang and informality. However, Froissard distances himself from this conversation and his isolation is compounded by their use of colloquial speech: 'Non, je n'ai pas faim; non, je ne veux pas manger. Il me semble que je n'aurai plus jamais besoin de manger. – Ah ! non, toi, là-bas, garde le cervelas pour toi. Il y a de l'ail dedans, et, comme on va sucer la pomme à sa gonze... De gros rires' (Voleurs, p.173). The isolation that Froissard feels at his fellow travellers' inability to fully comprehend his despair is expressed in the difference between the language the characters use. While Darien constructed an informal narrative in order to communicate in a direct, open fashion with his readers, it is clear that he did not embrace all aspects of anarchist literary culture.

The influence of anarchism on the fictional works of Barrès and Darien is fundamental, therefore, to the function and purpose of their literature and consequently to their approach to narration. Darien sought to convey 'un lambeau saignant d'existence', as he wrote in his 1890 preface to *Biribi*; in doing so, he was testifying to the oppression of the freedom of the individual by the army, by family, by the law, by moral codes, by nationalism and many other seemingly artificial social constructs. In contrast to this approach to anarchism

and to literature, Barrès strove to dissect the national consciousness and highlight the lack of energy and vitality he found within. His theory of the collective self determined the function of his writing, as it was to serve this expanded national identity. Barrès gleaned elements of anarchist method and theory, combined them with elements of socialist thought and psychological theory, and transformed these elements into what would eventually emerge as his own national-socialism.<sup>26</sup>

### **Political Engagement**

The notion of purpose in literature is essential to this thesis. The process of persuading the reader to engage with the political opinions of the author through the means of a fictional text is at the heart of the writings of both Darien and Barrès. The purpose-driven literature of Darien and Barrès can be identified as 'committed' or 'engaged', when the writer recognises the power of his or her work to draw attention to a particular ideological argument and to promote change. The committed writer does not put pen to paper in the hope that the reader will appreciate the style or form of his or her work, but rather that the reader will comprehend the function and purpose of the text and so change their political beliefs because of it.

As Susan Rubin Suleiman argues, there is a wide range of literature which could be labelled 'engagé', from political or religious pamphlets, through to

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<sup>26</sup> Barrès's socialism can be contextualised as part of a set of ideological concepts which had been evolving throughout the nineteenth century. Rooted in the agrarianism, collectivism, mutualism and many other concepts of the early nineteenth century, by the 1860s the term 'socialism' had taken precedence as the predominant term to denote an ideological framework based on collectivism and mutual co-operation. Barrès's socialism is founded on his belief in the collective nature of *le moi* as a national identity, as explored in his first trilogy of novels, *Le Culte du moi* (1888-1891). As Raymond Williams points out in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1976), collectivity was the distinguishing characteristic of socialism during this period. Through the use of the term 'socialist', Barrès was explicitly distinguished from those who, like Darien, expounded individualist theories of social relations.

political allegories such as Anatole France's *L'Île des pingouins* (1908), to the *roman à thèse*. Her investigation into the last of these includes a study of Barrès's *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale* trilogy (1897-1902) as examples of texts which are written in a realist style but are openly didactic in their intention to persuade the reader of the validity of the author's political opinion.<sup>27</sup> This trilogy is of great significance to Barrès's work as a committed writer and is perhaps the cornerstone in the development and exposition of his combined political and literary theory. Suleiman identifies it as an example of a *roman à thèse* in which Barrès's key ideological arguments are on display to the reader through persuasive didactic writing. This particular trilogy not only allows us to identify the narrative tools which Barrès used to persuade his readers; it also presents us with his own political development as a young man, from Boulangism through to his growing anti-Semitism and the Dreyfus Affair.

The motivation of Georges Darien to produce his fiction is clear from the paratextual material which accompanies some of his texts. Darien was painfully aware that his novels were never going to be best-sellers. He still felt the compulsion, however, to write and attempt to get his fiction published. He was, as Walter Redfern puts it, a 'very public writer' who sought to make known what he had experienced and what he believed.<sup>28</sup> In his preface to *Biribi*, Darien made it clear that he needed to bear witness to what he had seen and done as a soldier and make other people aware of the faults and failings of the army: 'J'ai voulu qu'il souffrît par devant témoins ce qu'il a souffert isolé' (*Voleurs*, p.10). Even though he knew not many people would read his fiction and fewer would

<sup>27</sup> Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Authoritarian Fictions: The Ideological Novel as a Literary Genre* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

<sup>28</sup> Walter Redfern, *Georges Darien: Robbery and Private Enterprise* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1985), p.12.

agree with his message, Darien persisted in struggling to publish his work because this was part of his duty to his political cause. He believed any novel written by him was not simply a piece of literature, as he concluded in his most directly political work, *La Belle France* (1900): 'Je ne sais pas si c'est un livre. Je voudrais que ce fût un cri' (*Voleurs*, p.1367). This 'cri' was his message to the reader and wider society; his critique of and his will to change the reality in which he found himself.

There is, therefore, a political motivation right at the heart of the publication of Darien's work. Despite the isolation within the literary sphere which he often felt, his persistence in producing texts in spite of difficult financial circumstances and reluctant publishers is an example of his activism which was at the centre of his anarchist beliefs. The act of publication was an act of rebellion. He was not in the business of selling books; instead he criticised this type of endeavour as a typical middle class value, an expression of the love of money above all else. Darien's politics drove him to appeal to his readers through an emotive and persuasive narrative voice. His narrators frequently reflect those marginalised figures of society whom he believed represented not only his own experiences, but also the failings of the Third Republic. These figures were prisoners, soldiers, immigrants, young men and children who were isolated and used by their families. Darien's objective in depicting injustice and brutality through the eyes of these narrators in novels such as *Biribi* was to move his readers. Richard Sonn argues that this use of emotion as a tool of persuasion is a part of the larger schematic of anarchist beliefs, which believed

in communication based on belief rather than knowledge.<sup>29</sup> Darien's battle to publish his texts and to provoke the emotions of his readers is indicative of his belief in the revolutionary power of the word, the principle of propaganda by the deed.

While it is clear that both Barrès and Darien wrote novels which had a political purpose, the agenda which motivated this purpose was not static. Indeed, the ideological development of these two men meant that the causes which they sought to promote through their literature changed over the course of their careers. The starting point for many studies of Barrès is his proto-fascism. Indeed, David Carroll has identified him as one the three fathers of French fascism, the other two being Maurras and Péguy.<sup>30</sup> Carroll argues that Barrès provided later fascist writer with a model of political aesthetics which was particularly French. It is undeniable that Barrès left a heritage of nationalistic, anti-Semitic and Catholic writing, both in the form of novels and journalism.

However, Barrès's reputation as a proto-fascist has led critics such as Carroll to miss the intricacies of the presentation of his political convictions in his writing. In his early career as a writer and politician Barrès's links with anarchism are demonstrated through his journalism and *L'Ennemi des lois*. He was also a dedicated follower of General Boulanger. Indeed, his loyalty to Boulanger was fervent as the tension between France and Bismarck's Germany

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<sup>29</sup> 'A work of art, the example of a saintly life, the terrorist's bomb, the martyr's self-sacrifice, were analogs either of the revolution or the anarchist ideal. They all demanded a fundamentally different kind of response from the didactic, expository, abstract message of the socialists', Richard Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin de Siècle France* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Carroll argues that these writers 'provided literary fascists with a specifically French origin for their own aestheticizing of politics – an interpretation of both the literary and political traditions that made extremist forms of nationalism and fascism originally and primarily products of culture', David Carroll, *French Literary Fascism: Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and the Ideology of Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p10. Earlier studies also identified Barrès as a source of French fascism, including Georges Valois, *Le Fascisme* (Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1927).



mounted during the late 1880s. Boulangism has been re-examined by various historians in recent decades.<sup>31</sup> Its significance is now seen less as a neo-imperialist attempt at a coup d'état, and more for its effect on individuals such as Barrès and Paul Déroulède.<sup>32</sup> During his early involvement with Boulangism, Barrès began to publish reviews of novels and poetry in journals such as *La Plume* and also to become actively involved with the Boulangist paper, *La Cocarde* (1888-1895). Furthermore, his commitment to the General's cause was demonstrated by his decision to stand as a Boulangist candidate in 1889; his campaign was successful and he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies as a member for Nancy. For Barrès, it was Boulangism which pulled him firmly into the political arena, and these early political roots continued to influence him throughout his career. This thesis will reassess the image of Barrès as the father of fascism through a reading of his fiction which concentrates on the development of his political views, from anarchism and Boulangism to socialism, nationalism and anti-Semitism in four of his works, *L'Ennemi des lois*

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<sup>31</sup> Frederick Seagur is one example of a revisionist treatment of Boulanger. His work, *The Boulanger Affair* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1969), argues that Boulanger was not a neo-caesarist figure, but rather a politician with vague objectives who attracted other political malcontents. This is a revision of the previous position that Boulanger was a serious threat to the survival of the Third Republic, as argued by Adrien Dansette, *Le Boulangisme* (Fayard, 1946) and Denis Brogan, *The Development of Modern France* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1940). Seagur summarises the position of other historians such as Brogan or Dansette thus: 'The French, it is claimed, were tired of the Republic by 1886 and rushed to join a movement called Boulangism, which in this account [Brogan] is indistinguishable from the personal popularity of Boulanger. The General was indeed so popular that all the malcontents of France – apparently the vast majority of the population – wished to see him overthrow the regime. Only his personal indecision kept him from seizing power after his election victory in Paris on January 27, 1889', p.vii.

<sup>32</sup> Déroulède led the crowd which gathered outside the General's residence and followed him to the Gare de Lyon, July 8<sup>th</sup> 1887, in order to prevent him from leaving Paris and provoke a coup d'état. The crowd was quickly dispersed by 200 policemen at the Place de la Bastille. This episode appears in Barrès's *L'Appel au soldat* (1900), the second novel of his *Roman de l'énergie nationale* trilogy, which also includes *Les Déracinés* (1897) and *Leurs figures* (1902). Indeed, *L'Appel au soldat*, written long after the General's death, is Barrès's assessment of the affair written in sympathy for Boulanger and romanticises the period and the man.

(1892), *Les Déracinés* (1897), *Leurs figures* (1902) and *Colette Baudouche* (1909).

While Boulangism was fundamental in Barrès's entry into politics, another key point in the development of his political thought was the Dreyfus Affair. It was this scandal which drew him further into racial and nationalist issues and further blurred the lines between literature and politics during this period. The story of the injustice done to Alfred Dreyfus, the Jewish army officer arrested for high treason in October 1894 and wrongfully imprisoned, is well-known and is often used to highlight the prevalence of anti-Semitism in France at this time. It is worth pausing briefly here to discuss the effect this affair had on the literary world and the influence it had on particular writers' careers.

The Dreyfus Affair is believed to be the catalyst which precipitated the crystallisation of two ideological views amongst the literary community. Zola's famous article published in *L'Aurore* in January 1898, 'J'accuse', his open letter to President Félix Faure, and his trial and conviction for libel which followed polarised many writers into two separate camps.<sup>33</sup> This political polarisation of the literary world is a subject to which historians have returned to time and again<sup>34</sup> and Maurice Barrès was firmly dedicated to the anti-Dreyfusard side of the debate.

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<sup>33</sup> As Norman Kleeblatt, the curator of the Jewish Museum in New York, writes in *The Dreyfus Affair: Art, Truth and Justice* (London: University of California Press, 1987), p.121: 'The Dreyfus Affair [...] marked the first time that intellectuals acted as a self-conscious group in attempting to influence public events. [...] It has been something of a historical commonplace to see the Dreyfus Affair as a dividing line, or a catalyst that helped draw the dividing line, between two political, ideological, and spiritual 'families' in France. Bredin calls the Affair a sign of a permanent division between two temperaments, both of them characteristically French: the defense of order and the defense of individual ethical values.' In this extract, Kleeblatt is referring to the work of Jean-Denis Bredin, a French lawyer and historian, who wrote *L'Affaire* (Julliard, 1984).

<sup>34</sup> During the early years of the affair, there was of course much journalistic commentary over the affair, including Barrès's own comments which appeared in *La Cocarde*. Towards the turn of the century there began to appear full volumes dedicated to the subject, such as Joseph

Barrès played a public role in the debate that raged in the literary world at that time. When Dreyfus was imprisoned, Barrès was a journalist for *La Cocarde* and a novelist whose work was growing in popularity and credibility. He firmly aligned himself along with the anti-Dreyfusards, creating differences between writers with whom he socialised, such as Anatole France and Zola.<sup>35</sup> While France and Zola were supported by other literary and political figures such as Péguy, Jules Renard, Jean Jaurès and Clemenceau, Barrès aligned himself with Bourget, Drumont, Léon Daudet, Coppée and Hérédia, among others. While the Dreyfusard press attempted to clear Dreyfus's name, anti-Dreyfusard journalism was also strident in its support of the army and Dreyfus's conviction. While those who supported the innocence of Dreyfus established the Ligue des Droits de l'homme, anti-Dreyfusard writers like Barrès joined the Ligue de la Patrie Française which numbered 23 members of the Académie Française amongst its ranks.<sup>36</sup> (Writers who found themselves on the opposite side of this divide found the affair had profound consequences for their careers. Anatole France, having been elected to the Académie Française in 1896, ceased to attend in 1900 as his affiliation with the Dreyfusard movement proved

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Reinach's *Tout le crime* (Stock, 1900) and Georges Clemenceau's *L'Iniquité* (Stock, 1899). Significantly, both of these works were published by P-V Stock, who also published many of Darien's works and who was widely known as a Dreyfusard publisher.

<sup>35</sup> Barrès's personal journal makes it clear that at this time he continued to meet with Zola and France. On December 7<sup>th</sup> 1897 Barrès wrote about the differences between Zola and himself as they met together: 'On craint à chaque phrase que lui et moi ne haussions trop le ton sur cette irritante affaire qui nous divise, mais tout va bien. Il est un brave homme' *Mes Cahiers 1896 – 1923* (Plon, 1963), p.96.

<sup>36</sup> The Ligue des Droits de l'homme was founded 20<sup>th</sup> February 1898, while Zola was standing trial for libel. The Ligue de la Patrie française was founded on 31 December, 1898, during a time when there was much support for Lt-Col Henry, who had started tampering with documents as early as September 1896 in order to ensure Dreyfus's conviction. After confessing his forgeries whilst under investigation during August 1898, Henry committed suicide in a military prison. There followed a campaign in the nationalist and anti-Semitic press to support Henry's actions, including support for Henry's widow in *La Libre parole*, Edouard Drumont's paper, as she attempted to clear Henry's name.

unpopular. He did not return until 1916.<sup>37</sup> The effects the affair had on a successful writer such as France are indicative of the power it had to dramatically influence the *champ littéraire*.) The Barrès of this thesis, therefore, is not the father of fascism or the Catholic of his later years, but rather the Barrès of the earlier decades of his career, the Barrès who was influenced by Boulangism and the Dreyfus Affair. It is his works of this period, from 1885 through to the beginning of the First World War, that show us his political fluidity and his evolving ideology.

In a similar way, Darien's ideology fluctuated during this period as he reacted to various events and dealt with difficult circumstances in his own life. The fluctuations and changes in political thought of both of these writers affected changes in their writing. A comparative investigation of the narrative techniques of Barrès and Darien will demonstrate the effect such changes had on their method of writing political fiction. As I have noted, Darien believed his fiction was a 'cri' for justice and recognition of the rights of the individual. This form of political writing is not, therefore, the measured arguments of Barrès who sought to convince the reader through reason and persuasion, but rather a testament to experience. In this respect, Darien could be said to follow in the steps of writers such as Jules Vallès (1832-1885), whose works such as *L'Enfant* (1879), *Le Bachelier* (1881) and *L'Insurgé* (1886) possess similarities to that of Darien, both in content and narrative technique.<sup>38</sup> This study of the approaches

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<sup>37</sup> While the events of the affair are not explicitly described by France in his *Histoire contemporaine* series (1896 – 1901), his post-Dreyfus works privilege themes and characters which deal with the divisions he observed in society which he believed were caused by the affair. For example, in *Monsieur Bergeret à Paris*, the protagonist discovers a fictional sixteenth-century volume in which the 'Trublions' appear, a group who align themselves with the army and the church in order to create discord and division in the kingdom.

<sup>38</sup> For example, both Vallès and Darien use the device of the child narrator in order to gain sympathy from the reader and create humour. In Vallès's *L'Enfant*, the young Jacques Vingtras describes his social climbing parents and makes them ridiculous. In *Bas les cœurs!* (1889),

of Barrès and Darien to certain common themes (national identity, the self, challenges to authority, the child and education) will demonstrate their political differences and the contrasting way in which they reacted to the contact they both had with anarchism early in their career. It is my contention that these different responses to anarchism not only profoundly influenced their fictional writing: they were, in fact, central to both men's desire to write in the first place. What characterises the work of Barrès and Darien above all is their commitment to their political causes. The texts they produced often exist in the grey area between fiction and polemic, seeking to persuade the reader of the validity of their claims.

This search for a persuasive style of narration is evident throughout the work of Barrès and Darien and later chapters will explore important sections of text in order to establish the methods of persuasion they employed. My purpose here is to demonstrate the primary narrative techniques that Darien and Barrès used early in their careers. For example, the second part of Barrès's *Le Culte du moi* trilogy, *Un Homme libre*, was published in 1889 and was the story of Philippe, a young man desperate to separate himself from the 'barbares' of the world through physical isolation and the study of selected thinkers and artists. Such a text is full of the author's own early spiritual and political beliefs fictionalised in the character of Philippe and his isolation.

Mon *moi* est jaloux comme une idole; il ne veut pas que je le délaisse. Déjà une lassitude et un dégoût nerveux m'avaient averti quand je me négligeais pour adorer des étrangers. J'avais compris que les Sainte-Beuve et les Benjamin Constant ne valent que comme miroirs grossissants pour certains détails de mon âme (*Œuvre I*, p.219).

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Darien too uses his child narrator to show the hypocrisy of his father's pseudo-nationalist politics.

This passage is taken from a section of the novel which describes Philippe's daily devotional process to the likes of Sainte-Beuve and is layered with the identity of the author. Firstly, there are terms which he presumed his readers would interpret as he did, 'le moi' for example, which tap into a type of metaphysical discourse popular at the time.<sup>39</sup> The tone of the narration is also significant, an aspect of these works which I shall be returning to in later chapters. In the above passage, it is clear that Barrès was intending to create a sense of urgency in his writing, for example through the use of the present tense, combined with the earnest tone of a serious thinker. Therefore, from the short section of text above, we already have clues as to Barrès's intentions and purposes for his fiction. He wished to make a serious attempt to persuade his readers of the validity of his spiritual and political beliefs through the use of a knowledgeable and intense narrator. This can be deduced not through the clarity of his writing, but rather through the difficulties and differences readers of his work experience. In deciphering the methods he used as a writer to convey his message and evaluating the success of these methods, we will be able to have a clearer picture of the purposes and ideology of the writer.

The fundamental purpose of both Barrès's and Darien's fiction was to promote their political programmes and this purpose had a profound effect on their methods of narration, their characterisation and the authority of the author's voice within the text. It is clear from the preface of *Biribi* that Darien believed it was possible to effectively portray real events in fiction:

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<sup>39</sup> For example, popular psychological works such as Paul Bourget's *Essai de psychologie contemporaine* (published in 1883) and Henri Bergson's *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (published in 1889 the same year as Barrès's *Un Homme libre*) not only developed Barrès's own theories but also promoted the discourse of *le moi* into the consciousness of the educated reading public.

Ce livre est un livre vrai. *Biribi* a été vécu. Il n'a point été composé avec des lambeaux de souvenirs, des haillons de documents, les loques pailletées des récits suspects. Ce n'est pas un habit d'Arlequin, c'est une casaque de forçat – sans doublure. Mon héros l'a endossée, cette casaque, et elle s'est collée à sa peau. Elle est devenue sa peau même. [...] J'aurais pu, surtout, m'en tenir aux généralités, rester dans le vague, faire patte de velours, - et me montrer enfin très digne, très auguste, très solennel, - presque nuptial, - très haut sur faux-col. Aux personnes qui me donnaient ces conseils, j'avais tout d'abord envie de répondre, en employant, pour parler leur langue, des expressions qui me répugnant, que j'avais voulu faire de la psychologie, l'analyse d'un état d'âme, la dissection d'une conscience, le découpage d'un caractère. Mais comme elles m'auraient ri au nez, je leur ai répondu, tout simplement, que j'avais voulu faire de *la Vie*. (Voleurs, pp.9-10)

Darien believed that experiences could truly be portrayed through fiction and, indeed, the novelist had a responsibility to write in this way. However, as we can see from the above passage, his methods of portraying this truth on the page were a long way from Naturalist, scientific rhetoric of objective reportage. Indeed, Darien makes specific reference to his objections to authors who cobble together novels from documents which are like 'rags'. It was not a mere process of observation which prompted Darien to write his novel, but rather bitter experience. His narrator-character is a fictionalised version of Darien who is stylised, yet *vraisemblable*. His novel is not autobiography, but rather a testament to what he and others like him experienced during their time in a military discipline camp. His narrator-character is engaged and involved in the narrative and can only tell what he sees and feels.

J'ai voulu qu'il vécût comme il a vécu, qu'il pensât comme il a pensé, qu'il parlât comme il a parlé. [...] J'ai voulu qu'il souffrît, par devant témoins, ce qu'il a souffert isolé. [...] Il [le livre] est tout entier dans l'étude de l'homme, il n'est point dans l'étude des milieux. Je constate les effets, je ne recherche pas les causes. *Biribi* n'est pas un roman à thèse, c'est l'étude sincère d'un morceau de vie, d'un lambeau saignant d'existence. (Voleurs, p.11)

While the mode of writing Darien rejected was constructed from 'lambeaux' of remembrances, rags of notes of documents, his narrative was also 'un lambeau'. However, this is not, he claimed, a rag which is stitched together with others to form 'un habit d'Arlequin' but rather a bloody scrap of existence, a piece of real life. Therefore, in Darien's texts, as we shall see in later chapters, the subjective

experiences of his narrator combine with his belief in the possibility of relating objective truth to the reader.

As one would expect, Barrès's approach is somewhat different to that of Darien. The narrator in many of Barrès's texts is powerful and present. He interjects into the narration in an explicit way, directing the reader to formulate opinions about certain characters or events. If Darien's project was to present life as he experienced it through his fiction, then Barrès's was to present his ideas on how life should be. In the preface to one of his early works, *Sous l'œil des barbares* (1888) which formed the first part of his *Le Culte du moi* trilogy (1888-1891), Barrès explains his approach to writing fiction at this time:

Voici une courte monographie réaliste. La réalité varie avec chacun de nous puisqu'elle est l'ensemble de nos habitudes de voir, de sentir et de raisonner. Je décris un être jeune et sensible dont la vision de l'univers se transforme fréquemment et qui garde une mémoire fort nette de six ou sept réalités différentes. Tout en soignant la liaison des idées et l'agrément du vocabulaire, je me suis surtout appliqué à copier exactement les tableaux de l'univers que je retrouvais superposés dans une conscience. C'est ici l'histoire des années d'apprentissage d'un *moi*, âme ou esprit. (Œuvre I, p.41)

Not only does this passage demonstrate the dense and sometimes difficult nature of Barrès's writing, but it also reveals an aspect of his approach to narration. Although he was not attempting to mirror the social conditions of the poor or reveal the character of the Parisian *monde à part* as Zola had done, he did believe that he too was performing the important task of fictionalising life as it appeared to him. He declares his writing as 'réaliste', although he inserts the caveat that reality itself is different for all of us. While Barrès believed he was fictionalising real experiences, this is all done in the rhetoric of metaphysics. Influenced by writers such as Bourget and Bergson, Barrès created works of fiction which he believed would educate his readers in the reality and power of the metaphysical world of *le moi*, *le sang* and *la terre*.



While the differences in the political programmes of Barrès and Darien influenced their methods of narration and characterisation, the presence of the author's voice within the text is also indicative of their status as writers within the *champ littéraire*. Barrès's success endowed his writing with a sense of authority which he built upon as his career prospered; Darien's commercial and critical struggles are reflected in the isolation and despair often experienced by his narrators.

The politicised nature of Barrès's and Darien's work impacted greatly, therefore, on their position as writers within the literary sphere. Indeed, the politicisation of the literary and artistic sphere during this period, including anarchist aestheticism and the entry into the political realm of writers during the Dreyfus Affair, can be interpreted as a sociological phenomenon. While historians such as Kleeblatt and Jean-Denis Bredin have referred to the Dreyfus Affair as the dividing line that polarised and politicised the intellectual community, this scandal could be interpreted as part of a shift from one generation of artists and writers to the next. In his analysis of the literary and visual artists involved in anarchism, Richard Sonn argues that the politicisation of the 'intellectuels' of this period was a reaction to the apolitical nature of the works of the previous generation of writers.<sup>40</sup> Anarchism, Boulangism and the Dreyfus Affair alike were, therefore, a means through which newly politicised writers and artists could register their discontent, not solely with the regime of the Third Republic, but also with the literary and artistic conventions of the previous generation. To support this line of reasoning, Sonn cites the example of the Symbolist writers who formed a significant part of the anarchist aesthetic

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<sup>40</sup> Sonn states: 'The politicization of the aesthetes of the 1890s can not be fully understood without reference to the relative lack of activism in the preceding decades', p.208.

ranks. He argues that the generation of Symbolists who were publishing in the second half of the 1880s were rebelling against not only the ideological discourse of many of their poetic predecessors, but also against the form in which their work was created. This artistic and political antagonism between generations within the literary sphere, combined with the publishing crisis which surfaced around 1890, increased the sense of tension within the *champ littéraire*. Although Sonn does not use Bourdieu's terminology, it is clear that he is referring to the conflict that was occurring in the literary field during this period.

### **The *Fin de siècle* period and the Theories of *le champ littéraire***

Pierre Bourdieu and Christophe Charle have produced works that discuss the period in which Barrès and Darien were writing in sociological terms.<sup>41</sup> Their sociological models will allow me to place the work of both writers into the *champ littéraire* and assess their influence within this field of cultural production and how they viewed their own status and identity in relation to their contemporaries. The basis of the methods of Bourdieu and Charle is the dual concept of economic influences and aesthetic appreciation of literary works. Bourdieu provides us with a double axis of evaluation: commercial success and critical acclaim. This dual axis will allow me to assess the position of Barrès and Darien within the literary field and therefore deduce the effect their ideology had on the success or failure of their careers. Firstly, let us turn to the

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<sup>41</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Les Règles de l'art: Genèse et structure du champ littéraire* (Seuil, 1998), *Homo academicus* (Minuit, 1988). Christophe Charle, *Naissance des «intellectuels» 1880 – 1900* (Minuit, 1990), *Les Élités de la République (1880 – 1900)* (Fayard, 1987), *La Crise littéraire à l'époque du naturalisme. Roman. Théâtre. Politique.* (PENS, 1979), *Les Intellectuels en Europe en XIXe siècle. Essai d'histoire comparée* (Seuil, 1996), *Paris fin de siècle. Culture et politique* (Seuil, 1996), *La République des universitaires, 1870 – 1940* (Seuil, 1994).

construction of the literary field and discuss the markers in a writer's career which indicated success and failure on Boudieu's axis.

What particularly interests Bourdieu about the French literary field in the *fin de siècle* period is the emergence of writers who entered into the political arena. He identifies the key point of this phenomenon as Zola's intervention into the political machinations of the Dreyfus affair with 'J'accuse'. Bourdieu argues that this intervention, and the row which followed, was: 'l'aboutissement et l'accomplissement du processus collectif d'émancipation qui s'est progressivement accompli dans le champ de production culturelle.'<sup>42</sup> The invasion of the political sphere by artistic figures, as exemplified by Zola and the 'pétition des intellectuels', was not simply a political action, but it has both sociological and symbolic value which changes the dynamic of the field of cultural production. Referring back to the work of Richard Sonn, this assessment of the intervention of writers and artists into the political sphere rings true. As we have seen, anarchist writers employed certain literary techniques and political discourses (propaganda, emotive language, *argot*) in accordance with their political values, and also as a rebellion against their literary predecessors. As Christophe Charle points out, the presence and order of certain names on the various petitions which were drawn up at the time of the Dreyfus Affair endowed this action with symbolic power; the label 'intellectuel' was not used merely to describe the profession of a signatory, but as a challenge to those who would disagree with them.<sup>43</sup> In sociological terms, therefore, it was a conflict of authority and power.

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<sup>42</sup> Bourdieu, *Les Règles de l'art*, p.216.

<sup>43</sup> Charle is arguing that the presence of the profession or qualification of the signatory on the 'pétition des intellectuels', written after their names, is not only there to identify the writer, but also exists as a symbolic challenge. He views this act as a symbol of the contest of power which

This conflict was, in Bourdieu's terms, the use of symbolic capital to gain power. The literary field is the source of much of this cultural capital. According to Bourdieu, the main purpose of literature, language and aesthetics is the creation and maintenance of hierarchies of power and domination. Status within these hierarchies is determined through the amount of symbolic or cultural capital an individual possesses, and social distinction is a product of this status. For example, during the period with which we are concerned, election to the Académie Française was dependent on the status of the writer within the literary field. Therefore, this institution ensured the maintenance of the hierarchy within the literary field. During the Dreyfus Affair, writers, poets and playwrights cashed in on their own symbolic capital through their entrance into the political arena, the sphere of government and social action. They had enough power to influence and change political opinion, and they used it. This was also a challenge to the balance of power that had previously existed within the literary field.

According to Bourdieu, there were two forces at work which created and maintained this balance of power in *le champ littéraire*. The first is the market, that which is popular with the buying public. The second is what Bourdieu terms 'consecration'; that is, recognition of an author by his or her peers and the literary establishment.<sup>44</sup> The dynamic of a field of cultural production such as literature ebbs and flows in correspondence with changing tides of popularity and consecration. It is, of course, possible for an author to be both commercially

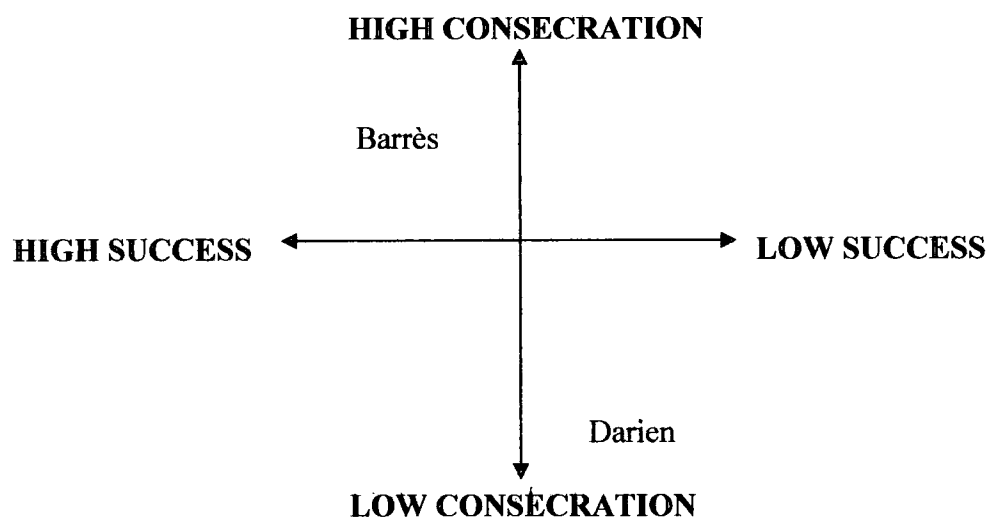
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was occurring at this time: 'l'utilisation qui y est faite du titre professionnel ou de diplôme hors de son contexte social normal' was 'comme un argument d'autorité contre une autre autorité judiciaire ou politique', Christophe Charle, *Naissance des «intellectuels» 1880 – 1900* (Minuit, 1990), p.143.

<sup>44</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Les Règles de l'art: Genèse et structure du champ littéraire* (Seuil, 1998), p.194.

successful as well as applauded by his or her peers, such as Anatole France and Maurice Barrès were in their lifetimes. At the other extreme, it is possible for an author to be unpopular both with the reader-consumer as well as the reader-critic, as Georges Darien was during his career. According to Bourdieu, the dynamic of the cultural field has, therefore, two axes rather than one:

**Figure 1.**



The limits of this field of cultural production are dependent on: first, the strength of the market to which it caters (in the case of the literary field, the number of people buying books); and second, the literary hierarchies which consecrate a piece of work. These hierarchies are determined, according to Bourdieu, by socio-economic factors such as changes in regime and the political landscape. For our purposes, the key challenge to the make-up of the artistic authorities of the Third Republic came with the intervention of certain writers in the Dreyfus Affair. In order to properly establish the position of Barrès and Darien in relation to this scheme of consecration and commercial success, I am devoting the next chapter to the discussion of their careers and works in the context of the literary field.

What were the markers of success on both the commercial and consecration axes during this period? Anatole France provides us with a useful example to demonstrate the point. France was both a critically and commercially successful writer. His journey to the top of his profession started as he worked for the library of the Sénat and had articles published in various journals. His first complete work, a collection of poems, *Les Poèmes dorés*, was published in 1873 with Lemerre. Following this, he continued to get more works published, eventually moving to a prestigious publishing house, Calmann-Lévy in 1878. He also continued to have articles published in widely-read newspapers and reviews, such as *Le Temps*, *Le Gaulois* and *L'Echo de Paris*. Many of his works were adapted for the stage, including a play of *Les Noces corinthiennes* in 1884 and an operatic version of *Thaïs* in 1894. He was elected to the Académie Française in 1896 and as his international standing grew, he travelled throughout Europe, North Africa and the Americas on a series of tours and conferences. In 1921 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Towards the end of his life, many of his works were translated into foreign languages. (He was particularly successful in English: *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard* was published in 1908, *The Merrie Tales of Jacques Tournebroche* in 1919 and *The Revolt of the Angels* in 1933). Although he is not as highly regarded now as he was at the time of his death, there have been some very recent publications of his works.<sup>45</sup> We can summarise the markers of success evident in Anatole France's career as follows: journalism, publication, move to a prestigious publishing house, election to the Académie Française, international recognition, Nobel Prize, posthumous

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<sup>45</sup> For example, Wildside Press have recently released a series of France's works in English, including: *Thaïs* (2002); *Penguin Island* (2002); and *Revolt of the Angels* (2002). In France, Livre de Poche recently published *Les Dieux ont soif* (2003).

acclaim. Therefore, France provides us with a model of success, both artistic and commercial.

Success as a writer during the *fin de siècle* period, as demonstrated by France, was often dependant on the inclusion into various social groups and networks, such as salons and academies. The seeds of France's dual success were sown early in his career with his involvement in the salon of Mme de Caillavet.<sup>46</sup> Such literary salons were where high society and literature mixed. Often held in the reception rooms of the *hôtels* of rich patrons, they provided the opportunity for writers to meet together with powerful and wealthy men and women and form links with them. The political persuasion of the salon also influenced which writers were acceptable in such circles. While the Dreyfusard salon of Mme de Caillavet welcomed Anatole France, the anti-Dreyfusard Mme de Loynes's salon included Maurice Barrès, Edouard Drumont and Léon Daudet amongst its ranks. Certain writers, generally well-educated (Anatole France was the exception to this rule), were acceptable to the salons having been introduced into the patron's social circle, and their careers benefited from this interaction. Once a writer had made connections within a particular salon, the next step was often to search for a publisher. The status of the publisher of the writer's work was indicative of the status of the writer in the eyes of the wider literary community (for example, France's move to Calmann-Lévy). Once a work had been published, there followed the hope of favourable critical reviews and the eventual possibility of winning prizes for a piece of work. However, while the salons provided writers with this entry into the higher echelons of the *champ*

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<sup>46</sup> Anatole France joined this salon, a meeting place for artists, writers, poets and their patrons, around 1883. By 1888 he and Mme de Caillavet were lovers. Léontine de Caillavet was the daughter of a wealthy banker, Auguste Lippman, and her husband, Albert Arman de Caillavet was financially dependent on her. They lived in one of the fairly plush *hôtels* of Avenue Hoche.

*littéraire*, G raldi Leroy and Julie Bertrand-Sabiani argue that they did not encourage creativity, but instead perpetuated the status quo of the literary elite.<sup>47</sup> Inclusion in a literary salon was a marker of consecration indicating that a writer was a member of the literary establishment.

A further marker of this process of consecration which was begun by the salons was the acceptance of the work of a writer by an academy. The most famous of these institutions was, and remains, the Acad mie Fran aise, whose authority was derived from its long history of scholarship, its stringent method of electing its members (a person could only be admitted to the 40 *immortels* if elected by the academy on the death of a member) and its conservative stance on most political and social issues. Its original mission was to define the French language and keep it pure. This was undertaken by producing a dictionary in 1694, which it has continued to do so at regular intervals (its latest appearance was in 2000). The other main function of the Acad mie is to give literary prizes, 'le m c nat' and, at present, it gives away around seventy prizes a year. During the *fin de si cle* period the Acad mie Fran aise was undergoing a shift in its make-up as it began to include more novelists as members of the *immortels*.<sup>48</sup> The Acad mie's attitude to the novel prior to this period was to reject it as an illegitimate form of artistic expression. This extract from Octave Feuillet's 'discours de r ception' demonstrates this point :

Plus d'une fois sans doute avant ces derniers temps, le roman avait p n tr  dans cette enceinte, et sous quels patronages illustres, vous le savez ; mais il ne s'y pr sentait qu'en s'effa ant dans la lumi re d' uvres plus accr dit es et plus imposantes, et l'on peut dire

<sup>47</sup> 'La tonalit  conservatrice de leur composition sociale r pondait aux go ts dominants du temps : les terrains de l'innovation  taient situ s ailleurs. On peut consid rer que les salons plus  ouvr  du c t  de la diffusion des valeurs (consacr es) que du c t  de la cr ation : combien de leurs grands hommes sont maintenant oubli s !', G raldi Leroy and Julie Bertrand-Sabiani, *La Vie litt raire   la Belle  poque* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1998), p.45.

<sup>48</sup> While Voltaire, Chateaubriand, Lamartine and Victor Hugo had all been members of the Acad mie, they had been elected under other titles rather than for their fiction writing. Feuillet was the first to be elected as a novelist in 1863.



qu'il y était plutôt pardonné qu'admis. Malgré de grands exemples en effet, vous n'étiez pas encore assurés, et vous n'aviez aucune raison de l'être, que le roman s'offrit comme une forme légitime de notre littérature nationale.<sup>49</sup>

Here we see the language of validation as novelists who were elected as members of the Académie sought to become legitimate members of the literary establishment. The election of writer-journalists such as Maxime du Camp (1880), Coppée (1884) and Pierre Loti (1891), served to extend the Académie's influence into the growing field of popular fictional writing.<sup>50</sup> The notable exception to this was, of course, Zola who was never elected to sit amongst the *immortels*. While it wished to exert its authority over the growing field of journalism and fiction, the Académie would not legitimise Zola's 'littérature putride'. The conservative nature of the Académie Française during the late nineteenth century was also evident in its reaction to Anatole France's intervention into the Dreyfus Affair. Many anti-Dreyfusards, such as Coppée, Loti and Bourget, were also academicians. The political conservatism of the Académie reflected and perpetuated the literary status quo as the institution absorbed new modes of journalism and writing in order to extend its influence.

During the *fin de siècle* period, other rival academies were established, notably the Académie Goncourt. This academy was officially recognised in 1903, following the death of Edmond de Goncourt in 1896 who had directed in his will that the sale of his possessions would be used to fund a 'société littéraire'. This body would be made up of ten members who would give out literary prizes once a year. The origins of this academy lie in the regular

<sup>49</sup> As quoted by Paul Bourget, 'Le Roman à l'Académie', *Trois siècles de l'Académie Française par les Quarante* (Firmin-Didot, 1935), p.213.

<sup>50</sup> As André Chaumeix wrote: 'l'Académie Française, en appelant à elle des journalistes devant le cours du XIXe siècle, a l'intention de ce qu'elle a fait. Elle a voulu accueillir les représentants d'un pouvoir nouveau dont elle sentait l'influence sur les lettres, sur l'esprit public, sur les affaires nationales', 'Académie et le journalisme', *Trois siècles de l'Académie Française par les Quarante* (Firmin-Didot, 1935), p.329.

meetings held at the Goncourts' home, where writers such as Huysmans, Léon Hennique and Alphonse Daudet would discuss the events and ideas of the day. Its aim was to recognise and promote those writers whose work and talents had not been recognised by the Académie Française. However, while this was, in some respects, an alternative form of recognition or consecration for writers it, still used the model, established by the Académie Française, of peer recognition and recommendation to form its membership and decide upon its prizes. This was not a radical alternative to the Académie Française but instead an alternative route to consecration. Access to this academy was dependent, to some extent, on the social connections between writers. These connections were forged in the salons and meetings of literary societies and were galvanised in the bodies of the academies. Therefore, the process of consecration in the Académie Goncourt was not different to that of its rival. Indeed, it is my belief that bodies of consecration that rivalled the Académie Française, such as the Académie Goncourt, are further examples of the conflict between groups of writers for dominance within the literary field of power.

The process of consecration, while significant in raising the profile of writers such as Anatole France, did not ensure commercial success. While it is true that France was a commercially successful writer, the best-sellers lists of the day reveal other writers who were not among the *immortels*. The best selling novel up to 1905 was Daudet's *Sapho* (1884) which sold 310,000 copies, followed by Zola's *La Débâcle* (1892) which sold 213,000. If we add together all novels sold by the most commercially successful writers, then it is Zola who comes out on top: up to 1905 he sold 2,628,000 novels, while Daudet sold

2,212,000 and Ohnet 1,425,000.<sup>51</sup> While the Académie Française had begun to accept prose fiction and journalism as legitimate literary pursuits, the most popular fiction writers were not subject to its consecration. Indeed, the difference between those writers who sold the most copies of their works and those who were consecrated by institutions like the academies reveals to us further tensions that were inherent in the literary field at this time. Popular fiction which had journalistic roots was not yet recognised by consecrating institutions. Novelists were passed over by the academies for ideological reasons (such as Zola's support of Dreyfus) and artistic reasons. As Octave Feuillet said in his 'discours de réception', during the *fin de siècle* period, the novel was 'plutôt pardonné qu'admis'.

There were many other sociological reasons why writers were not successful on either of Bourdieu's axes. Here too we find that ideology is intrinsically linked to the success or failure of a particular writer. Unsurprisingly, the social network of the *champ littéraire* which determined the consecration of writers such as Barrès and France was not available to writers who promoted ideologies which were opposed to the ruling elite. In particular, anarchist writers often operated outside these social networks. As I have demonstrated through the case of Anatole France, one of these key markers to the success (both artistic and commercial) was the entry into a publishing house. The process of finding a publisher and achieving any sort of commercial success was difficult for authors like Darien whose extreme politics were unpalatable for the wider reading public. Such works appealed to a narrow section of readers and an equally marginal group of reviewers. Larger, more powerful publishers

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<sup>51</sup> Figures taken from Leroy and Bertrand-Sabiani, p.18.

like Calmann-Lévy were not interested in writers who promoted anarchist propaganda. Publishers who took on writers such as Darien were smaller and particularly interested in political writing.

Furthermore, the topography of the literary field provides us with a geographical embodiment of the distance between anarchist writers and the social networks which powered the *champ littéraire*. While Barrès frequented the salons and the cafés of the Parisian boulevards and the Quartier latin ('le Flore' a particular favourite), anarchist writers and journalists like Darien met in the cafés and bars of Montmartre. While the Rive gauche (the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> arrondissements) was the area which historically housed many publishers, Montmartre (situated on a hill overlooking the north of the city) was removed from the centre of publishing and the salons of the grands boulevards. The topology of power within the literary field was shifting at this time. The hierarchies of the academies and the salons, whose activity was focused on the central districts of the city, continued to maintain their systems of consecration. The anarchist and radical writers of Montmartre attempted to challenge the authority of the literary and political establishment; they sought to do so not through participating in the hierarchical systems (such as the Académie Goncourt did) but rather by operating independently from such structures of power.

Therefore, exclusion from consecration was due to a number of complex reasons. While some writers were excluded because of their ideology, others were passed over because of the apparent vulgarity of their narrative technique. These two reasons for exclusion should not be separated, however. For example, while Zola's literature was deemed too 'putride' for the Académie Française, his

politics also contributed to his exclusion from those circles. It can also be argued that inclusion in the Academy worked in the same way. Maurice Barrès was elected as a member of the Académie Française in 1906. Barrès's Dreyfusard credentials and his nationalist politics, combined with his didactic, psychological narrative technique, made him a natural candidate for the *immortels*. The consecration of certain writers demonstrates how politics and narrative technique cannot be separated during this period. In the case of anarchist writers like Darien, isolation from the social networks which maintained and created the literary field of power was a consequence not only of their ideologies, but also of the emotive, metacognitive propaganda which their politics required. As a result of this isolation of anarchist writers from the processes of commercial success and consecration, the geography of the literary field began to alter as Montmartre was established during this period as the centre of anarchist literature and culture.

It is the interweaving of ideology with narrative technique that influenced the position of a writer within the established systems of literary power in the *champ littéraire* and which is the crux of this thesis. Through the examination of the lives and fiction of Maurice Barrès and Georges Darien, we shall see how Barrès attempted to develop an authoritative voice as an author and narrator in order to further his own status as a writer. The work of Darien, on the other hand, reflects his isolation from the accepted hierarchies of the literary field in his texts. The tensions between art and politics, the individual and society and the role of the writer as propagandist are all questions which Georges Darien and Maurice Barrès addressed in their fiction and through their involvement in

the political sphere. As we shall see, both of these writers acted and reacted to political questions at varying levels of involvement and commitment and, in so doing, they provoked varying reactions from their literary colleagues. The conflict between Barrès's search for literary and political authority (his search for consecration in the *champ littéraire*) and Darien's anarchist individualism is stark as we examine contrasting texts which deal with similar issues such as education and national identity.

This study of Barrès's and Darien's fictional works will reveal the tensions which existed between art and politics during this period. The manner in which Barrès and Darien promoted their political agenda through their fiction will demonstrate the fundamental control their ideologies had over their narrative technique and the subjects they chose to address in their writing. I will examine their lives and careers as writers and the role they each played in the literary field, in order to give a clearer picture of their status as writers and the effect their ideologies had on this status. I will then go on to examine the following themes in their novels: their interpretation of their own ideological development (chapter two); the representation of real events (chapter three); the voice of the child and education (chapter four); their view of political authority (chapter five); and the way in which they deal with national identity in their fictional texts (chapter six). While Barrès and Darien are obviously very different writers who created texts to promote opposing ideological viewpoints, they often addressed similar issues and focussed on comparable characters in their fiction, such as the young boy disillusioned with education and family. My comparative reading of their fictional texts will reveal how the ideological agenda of Darien

and Barrès fundamentally controlled how they addressed these issues and the narrative technique they chose to employ.

This chapter began with extracts from paratextual material of two early works of Barrès and Darien. In these two sections of the prefaces of *L'Ennemi des lois* and *Biribi*, both men indicate to the reader their intentions in writing these novels. These excerpts were written at a time when Barrès and Darien were both affected by anarchist thought and activism. During this period of their careers, they both admired the action of bombers like Emile Henry, they both wrote for the same newspapers (such as *La Plume*), they both were considering the role of literature in anarchist activities. However, these two extracts demonstrate the divergence in the ideologies of Barrès and Darien and, consequently, in the divide between them which opened up in the literary field. Darien firmly believed that his narrative represented a true depiction of existence, and that in writing and publishing his work, he was executing an act of rebellion against the authorities whose brutality he was revealing in *Biribi*. Barrès's objectives for writing are very different. He wrote he wanted to 'décrire la sensibilité des personnes de ce temps qui ont la vie intérieure la plus intense et la plus ornée.' He stated that he neither wanted to persuade or convince, but rather to describe the 'interior life' of others. He too believed that his narrative was capable of revealing the truth of life as he saw it. Both of these men believed that the description and revelation of reality was the true function of their work. It was their contrasting ideological viewpoints which drove them to interpret and represent reality in their texts. The didacticism of Barrès's works, the authority of his narrative voice and the density of his prose are products of his promotion of political collectivity, a strong sense of national identity and the

authority of national heritage and glory. Darien's singular, isolated narrators combined with the conversational tone of much of his prose and the virulent, powerful, critical view he painted of bourgeois society were driven by his own need to privilege the figure of the individual above all forms of collective society and authority.

While Darien's lack of commercial success and consecration may seem to indicate that his endeavour as a writer to influence political opinion was a failure while Barrès succeeded, we shall see that at the very heart of Darien's anarchism was a compulsion not to be a successful writer, but merely a writer who is able create and publish his fiction. While Barrès's political agenda required and received both commercial success and consecration, Darien's anarchism required his writing not to be merely a work of literature but rather a 'cri' which revealed life as it was.



## Chapter Two

### Politics and Purpose: Barrès and Darien in *le champ littéraire*

The effect of anarchism on the lives and careers of Georges Darien and Maurice Barrès was far-reaching. The exposure that these writers had to anarchist ideology and activism during their early careers provoked profound reactions in them both, which in turn significantly shaped the development of their political beliefs and their careers as authors and journalists. Darien's individualism, anti-militarism and abhorrence of organised religion and politics all have their roots in his own experiences as a young man. His interpretations of these experiences, their transformation into bitter parables of isolation, oppression and the search for liberty, owe their themes, structure, characterisation and narrative technique to his response to anarchist ideology. Barrès's reaction to anarchism was more subtle, but no less profound. Throughout his career, he would create characters who possessed 'l'énergie', the will to act and effect national change. While the activism of anarchists impressed him, Barrès reacted against other aspects of anarchism, such as the individualism that Darien prized. Throughout his career, Barrès's ideology developed into a synthesis of socialism, nationalism and Catholicism which was rooted in his sense of an expansive, collective self.

While their reactions to anarchism had fundamental effects on the ideological development of Barrès and Darien, this, in turn, exerted profound influences on their status as writers within the literary field. Indeed, their political standpoints and their position within the *champ littéraire* are so intrinsically linked they cannot be separated. The choices they made as writers (from which review to write for, to the construction of their novels) were determined by their politics, and these choices determined both their status in

relation to their literary peers and their attitude to their readers. The purpose of their literature was to promote their ideological agenda, and this determined its form and function. It also shaped the roles that Barrès and Darien performed as writers. Within the context of the changing structure of the *fin de siècle* literary field, how were the status of Barrès and Darien established and how did their politics directly affect their position within this field?

The investigation of the lives and careers of these writers alongside their fictional texts raises the thorny issue of the relationship between the study of art and the study of its creator. This is a question which the narrator of Julian Barnes's novel *Flaubert's Parrot* echoes as he stands in front of a statue of the great author: 'Why does the writing make us chase the writer? Why can't we leave well alone? Why aren't the books enough? Flaubert wanted them to be: few writers believed more in the objectivity of the written text and the insignificance of the writer's personality; yet still we disobediently pursue.'<sup>1</sup> Barnes's narrator uses the statue of Flaubert to symbolise the importance of the character of the author for many readers, even while he acknowledges Flaubert's own rejection of the significance of the writer's own life in his or her fiction.

There has been considerable critical debate concerning this issue over recent decades, ranging from Wimsatt and Beardsley's work in the 1940s, to Barthes's seminal essay of 1968, 'The Death of the Author', to Sean Burke's works of the 1990s.<sup>2</sup> The question of whose voice is present in the text is a vital one when considering the nature of committed literature. If the function of a

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<sup>1</sup> Julian Barnes, *Flaubert's Parrot* (London: Picador, 2002), pp.2-3.

<sup>2</sup> W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, 'The Intentional Fallacy', in *Twentieth Century Literary Criticism: A Reader*, ed. by David Lodge (London: Longman, 1972); Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, trans. by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977); Sean Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992); Sean Burke, *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern: A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995).

text, such as *Biribi*, is to present the reader with a version of reality as the author perceives it, then it is necessary to relate the text to the author in order to fully understand its function. The objection to this reasoning is that interpreting a text as a representation of the author's intentions is not only futile, but ultimately leads to a limited view of the text. As Barthes argued, the interpretive authority of the text rests not with the author, but rather with the reader.

However, the committed text presents the reader with a more direct link to its author through the nature of the narrative. In novels such as *Bas les cœurs!* or *L'Ennemi des lois*, the author is self-consciously present within the text, represented by his narrator. The close relationship between Barrès and Darien and the narrators they constructed to tell their stories means it is reasonable to examine their lives in parallel with their texts. Furthermore, the relationship between the production of their texts and the status of Barrès and Darien within the literary field makes an examination of the lives a necessity. In particular, it is necessary to examine those elements of their lives and careers which were formative in the production of their fictional works and the development of their ideological beliefs: their interpretations of their family backgrounds; their interaction with the changes which were occurring within the literary field during the early years of their careers; their conception of their roles as writers; their relationships with their publishers; and the reaction of their peers to their works.

### **Politicising their family backgrounds**

Before turning to an exploration of the early writing careers of Barrès and Darien, it is necessary to consider how each writer viewed his family

background. Both writers explicitly interpreted their upbringing as experiences which contributed to the formulation of their political and literary discourse. While Barrès cultivated a mythologised, symbolic role for his family in his writings, Darien characteristically rebelled against his family, in particular against the military ambitions of his father.

Barrès wrote extensively about his own life and also about his family. In doing so, he presented the reader with a transfigured vision of himself, an idealised version of Maurice Barrès. Not only was Barrès seeking to become a respected writer with a good standing amongst his peers, he was also seeking to become a political figurehead who could embody the political and spiritual beliefs which were most important to him: nationalism, socialism and Catholicism.

There are reasonably trustworthy biographical details available for Maurice Barrès; among the many biographies of Barrès, Sarah Vajda's (published in 2000) is perhaps the most comprehensive.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the twentieth century there were numerous biographical publications devoted to Barrès and his correspondence has also received much critical attention.<sup>4</sup> Barrès was a great journal writer and in his complete works published by *Club de l'honnête homme*, eight of the twenty volumes are dedicated to his *Cahiers*. The

<sup>3</sup> Sarah Vajda, *Maurice Barrès* (Flammarion, 2000). The many historical studies of Barrès's works and political role include: Robert Soucy, *Fascism in France: The Case of Maurice Barrès* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1972); Zeev Sternhell, *Maurice Barrès et le nationalisme français* (Complexe, 1985); H. Mauras and N. Mourras, *Maurice Barrès et Charles Maurras. La république ou le roi* (Plon, 1970).

<sup>4</sup> Philippe Barrès, 'Barrès mon père... Souvenirs', *Le Figaro littéraire* (17 November 1962), Maurice Barrès, *Mes Cahiers, 1896 – 1923*, ed. G Dupré (Plon, 1963), 'Autour de quelques lettres de Maurice Barrès', *Revue des deux mondes* (May 1955), pp.257-269, & (June 1955), pp.442-452, Dubreuil, Léon, 'Lettres de Maurice Barrès Charles Le Goffic', *Annales de Bretagne*, 58 (1951), pp.19-88, J.-P. Lacassagne, 'Lettres inédites entre Maurice Barrès et André Gide', *Bulletin de la Faculté des lettres de Strasbourg* (March 1969), pp. 348-60, Alfred Saffrey, 'Barrès et Péguy: lettres et documents inédits', *Amitié Charles Péguy* (August 9<sup>th</sup> – September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1952), pp.3-32, René Jacquet, *Notre Maître Maurice Barrès* (P.Lamm, 1900), Maurice Davateur, *La Jeunesse de Maurice Barrès (1862 – 1888)* (Lille: Atelier reproductions des thèses, 1975).

legacy of his works was also promoted by his son, Philippe Barrès. The size of this personal legacy of correspondence and biographical detail is indicative not only of the interest in Barrès which was evident in the early part of the twentieth century, but also of the importance placed by Barrès himself on leaving details of his life and works behind. He was a writer who was very conscious of leaving a literary heritage for following generations and from his own memoir writings and his letters, preserved for future readers by his own son, we can see that Barrès clearly thought that his life and work were an important part of that heritage. It is also interesting to note that not only did Barrès record his own memoirs for posterity, he also wrote those of his grandfather, Jean-Baptiste-Auguste Barrès, who was an officer in the army during the first half of the nineteenth century. It is worth pausing here to examine the style of these memoirs and how it reflects Barrès's belief in the significance of his own family heritage and the literary heritage he was leaving for the nation.

Barrès injected a sense of spirituality and philosophy into his own memoirs. This was not just a record of facts and events, but rather an attempt to examine the spiritual state of France during his lifetime, to try and take France's spiritual temperature. His reflections on his early years demonstrate this style of memoir writing:

Je suis né en 1862. Ces années 60 sont pour l'énergie française le point le plus bas de sa courbe. Une époque de profonde dépression. Cela commandait mon rôle. [...] Je dois tout aux mœurs de la Lorraine, tout à sa position historique et géographique, ce qui fit que je suis pareil. [...] D'où cela nous vient-il cet amour de la France? Regardons au sortir de [l'église], la Maison des Loups. Cela nous vient de là et puis du fonds éternel. Nous sommes orientés vers le soleil. Callot et Claude Gellét vont à Rome et Hugo à Virgile. C'est la Lorraine qui m'a donné les idées par lesquelles, à mon insu d'abord, puis consciemment j'ai été gouverné. (Cahiers, pp.4-8)

From the very beginning of his memoirs, Barrès plunged his readers into metaphysical rhetoric, using the terminology of psychological writers such as Henri Bergson. This is a view of a life in retrospect, interpreted as a spiritual and

philosophical journey and destined to affect the 'énergie' of France for the good. Sarah Vajda calls this style of journal narration 'l'homme intérieur' as she envisions the writer as a type of hermit living in a monastic cell surrounded by literature, much like Barrès's character of Philippe in *Un Homme libre*.<sup>5</sup> I would argue this is the romanticised view of the writer of *Mes Cahiers* which Barrès sought to project. This version of his childhood shaped into a narrative governed by his metaphysical beliefs means that the Barrès the reader meets here has a destiny which was rooted in the soil of Lorraine and which propelled him to write and to enter into the political arena. This sculpting of real events to produce a sort of heroic Barrès figure is also evident in Maurice Barrès's version of the life of his grandfather. The following passage is taken from the end of the work after he has retired from army life:

Ainsi s'est terminée une carrière qui, si elle n'a pas eu un grand éclat, a été du moins utile à la France et honorable pour moi. Je dis, avec orgueil, *honorable*, parce que, pendant trente et un ans, j'ai toujours fait consciencieusement mon devoir, dans toutes les occasions, et partout où je me suis trouvé; que je n'ai aucune mauvaise action à me reprocher, et que j'ai toujours mérité l'estime et la confiance de mes supérieurs et de mes subordonnés, ainsi que l'amitié de mes camarades et des corps où j'ai servi. [...] Quant à l'avancement, j'aurais pu, j'aurais dû espérer être plus favorisé, si les circonstances m'avaient mieux servi, si j'avais eu plus d'ambition, plus d'intrigue, et, comme tant d'autres, cherché à faire valoir mes services. Mais ces moyens, très en usage et peu licites, m'ont toujours répugné.<sup>6</sup>

Again the reader is presented with a portrait of an unsung hero, a man who did his duty for the glory of *la patrie*. Through a stylised, mythologised version of his grandfather's voice, Barrès conveys the disappointment Jean-Baptiste-Auguste Barrès felt at the injuries and accidents which had prevented him from rising through the ranks of the army.<sup>7</sup> At his retirement he was a year away from promotion to lieutenant colonel, but as it was he remained as a chef de bataillon

<sup>5</sup> Vajda, p.17.

<sup>6</sup> Maurice Barrès, *Souvenirs d'un officier de la Grande Armée, publiés par Maurice Barrès, son petit-fils* (Plon, Nourrit, 1923), p.326.

<sup>7</sup> *Souvenirs d'un officier de la Grande Armée*, pp.320-2.

(the British equivalent to this rank is a major). Even though this was clearly not the glittering career of a military great, Barrès transformed the difficulties of his grandfather's years in the army into a symbol of persistence and loyalty. The language employed by Barrès here is extreme, and its description of the army officer leaves no room for negotiation: the reader is presented with a man beyond reproach. Through the dramatisation of his own life and that of his grandfather, there is a sense that Barrès was attempting to create a type of myth about his family, endowing both himself and his grandfather with heroic characteristics and a sense of destiny.

It is clear that his family origins were extremely significant to Barrès the writer. Not only did he include elements of his own childhood in *Les Déracinés*, but his link with the Lorraine region endured throughout his career. His loyalty to his *pays* was a theme in many of his novels in later life, including *Colette Baudoche* (1909) in which the heroine is a young girl from Metz who rejects the love of a German man in order to stay loyal to her Lorraine.

Auguste-Maurice Barrès was born in Charmes-sur-Moselle, Lorraine, on 19 August 1862. He had an older sister, Anne-Marie, who had been born in 1860. His father, Joseph-August Barrès, had graduated from the *École Centrale* and worked as a chemistry teacher, a tax inspector, and then gave up work completely. The Barrès family was bourgeois, therefore, with strong connections to the army and a strong religious streak too. Maurice Barrès was particularly close to his mother, Claire-Anne Luxor, who was a devoted Catholic. He wrote in his *Mémoires* that he was part of 'une famille où toutes les femmes sont pieuses et trouvent du plaisir à l'église; où tous les hommes

reconnaissent dans le baptême, la première communion et la mort la noble et bienfaisante autorité de l'Église' (Cahiers, p.4).

As a child, Barrès lived in a region which was occupied by German soldiers between 1870 and 1873, and this sense of invasion and the ensuing annexation of Alsace-Lorraine not only deepened his loyalty to France and Lorraine, but also his hostility to Germany, a theme which recurs in his *Bastions de l'Est* trilogy (1905-1921), of which *Colette Baudouche* is the second part. These are the touchstones of his writing which have their origins in his young life and are rooted back in his family history. Barrès embraced his family heritage and built on it to create a system of political and spiritual beliefs. His fictionalisation of these beliefs in parable-like narratives such as *Colette Baudouche* was arguably a mythologising of his family history, and of himself by association. He claimed in his *Cahiers* that: '[j]e suis la continuité de mes parents. Cela est vrai anatomiquement. Ils pensent et ils parlent en moi. [...] Je n'ai pas la prétention de penser mieux, de sentir mieux, de savoir davantage que mes père et mère; je suis eux-mêmes' (Cahiers, pp.126-7). Through his entrenchment in his family history and his devotion to his parents he not only remained loyal to them, but Barrès went on to create an expansive sense of the self.<sup>8</sup> This was a collective self: his parents flowed through his veins and through his soul, and he could not but fulfil his destiny as a product of Lorraine.

If Barrès was the loyal son, mythologising his ancestral roots, Georges Darien was a rebel and a traitor. While Barrès set about creating a collective sense of *le moi*, Darien was a loner and set out to promote the cause of the individual. Georges Darien poses problems for the researcher. Little of his

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<sup>8</sup> This was the central tenet of his early *Culte du moi* trilogy, (1888-1891).



correspondence survives and what does is mainly professional, between writer and publisher; Darien appears to have left no personal diaries or other writing. Details of his family life have been sketched out by Bosc in his short work on Darien, and also by Pauvert in his introduction to the Omnibus collection of Darien's novels, but these only really give us the bare bones of his childhood and family. The most comprehensive work on Darien's life has been done by Auriant, culminating in his 1966 work *Darien et l'inhumaine comédie*.<sup>9</sup>

Darien was born on 6 April 1862 in Paris, rue de Bac in the 6<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, as Georges Hippolyte Adrien.<sup>10</sup> His younger brother, Henry, was born in 1864. His father, Honoré Hadrien (again, another change of name) was a shopkeeper who ran a *magasin de nouveautés*. Darien's family was Protestant with German relations and this element of his family life was fictionalised in *L'Épaulette* (1905), in which the child narrator, called Jean, has a German grandfather and an uncle Karl, who is in the Prussian army during the Franco-Prussian war. Darien's mother, Françoise Chatel, died when he was seven, and his father married Élise Antoinette Schlumberger a year later, a Catholic, with whom Georges did not get on. After the wedding, the family went to live in Versailles in 1870. This removal from the capital was also fictionalised by Darien in *Bas les cœurs!* in which the young central character, Jean, lives in Versailles during the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune. This isolation from Paris during the period of the war and the Commune produces a distance between the drama of political events and the reality of the everyday

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<sup>9</sup> David Bosc, *Georges Darien* (Aix-en-Provence: Sulliver, 1996); Georges Darien, *Voleurs !*, a collection of works comprising: *Biribi*, *Bas les cœurs!*, *Le Voleur*, *L'Épaulette*, *Les Pharisiens*, *Gottlieb Krumm* and *La Belle France*, pref. by Jean-Jacques Pauvert (Omnibus, 1994); Auriant, *Darien et l'inhumaine comédie* (Brussels: Ambassade du Livre, 1966).

<sup>10</sup> There seems to be no record of his change of name to Darien before 1888 when he signed with his publisher Savine using this name. When this change occurred (and for what reasons) is unclear.

life of Jean and his family. The death of Darien's mother again appears in his fiction: Jean's mother dies in *L'Épaulette*, leaving him with a father who wants him to join the army and win the glory of the officer's *épaulette*. This is a fictional echo of Darien, who was also encouraged to join the army by his father. Darien made the link between family, nation and army in *L'Épaulette* as the child narrator sees the battle for France as a battle to defend his family. However, in stark contrast to the link made between family, nation and army by Barrès, Darien's narrator becomes disillusioned, leading him away from the collective family life to a more solitary experience.<sup>11</sup> Darien's narrators are men who experience isolation and disillusionment through difficult familial relationships. While Barrès glorified his family, his region and his nation into his collective, expansive *moi*, Darien focused on the solitary individual who only finds exclusion and betrayal in others.

The family backgrounds of both Barrès and Darien were fundamental to much of their fiction. For Barrès, it provided him with a base upon which to build his politics and his spiritual beliefs, leading him to create a collective self which was based upon and encompassed his family. For Darien, however, it is a sense of isolation and individualism rooted in his family background that pervades much of his fiction and politics. While Barrès strove to mythologise his middle-class family and transform them into an ancestral base for his politics and his fiction, Darien took elements of his family and transformed them into isolating factors for his narrator-characters. As we shall see, the treatment of family relationships and the voice given to the young character of Darien's *Bas*

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<sup>11</sup> As Jean, Darien's narrator comments: 'je n'ose point penser que l'histoire de la campagne, toute notre histoire, toute notre politique n'est qu'un tissu de mensonges convenus et de fictions officielles. Je n'ose point penser que nos soldats ont versé leur sang, pendant la guerre, d'abord pour l'Empire, puis pour la République bourgeoise, et jamais pour la France' (*Voleurs*, p.700).

*les cœurs!* and of Barrès's *Les Déracinés* are indicative of the way in which each author used fiction to transform reality into ideological messages.

### **Changes in the literary field**

The literary field of the late nineteenth century underwent some major changes during the early careers of Barrès and Darien. The commercialisation of the press and the developments in printing affected the potential readership of both journalism and fiction and this, in turn, effected changes in the way newspapers and novels were produced. The changes which occurred during this period had profound effects of the status of Barrès and Darien as political journalists and novelists. As the book-buying and newspaper markets flourished in the 1880s and 1890s, there was a reassessment of the relationship between reader and author as the writers became more financially dependant on their customer-readers.

In the generation of writers previous to Barrès and Darien, the structure of the literary field was dependant on the network of literary *salons*, hosted by the wealthy bourgeoisie and aristocracy of Paris (as we observed in chapter one). While writers did not necessarily come from wealthy families, significant literary success proceeded from a connection with a *salon*. For example, as a young writer Anatole France had to supplement his meagre earnings with his income from a job at the library of the Sénat before becoming a well-known member of the *salon* of Madame de Caillavet. As Paul Lidsky argues in *Les Écrivains contre la Commune*, the maintenance of the literary field of this period was linked to the maintenance of the aristocratic and bourgeois orders of

society.<sup>12</sup> Lidsky's study of different reactions to the Commune reveals distinct sociological and political characteristics amongst the generation of writers who were publishing during the twenty years which followed, and those who bought their works. Lidsky writes:

Ils [les documents] révèlent le degré élevé d'intégration de l'homme de lettres à la société de son époque, qui correspond à un fait objectif: durant cette période du Second Empire et du début de la Troisième République, il n'a qu'un public, une clientèle possible pour l'écrivain: le public bourgeois et aristocratique. [...] L'écrivain, malgré ses apparences d'indépendance ou de révolte contre l'ordre bourgeois, est lié fondamentalement en tant qu'écrivain, à cet ordre qui lui assure sa réussite littéraire.<sup>13</sup>

Here we see Lidsky's assessment of the dynamic of the *champ littéraire* during the period which followed the Commune. The writer is inextricably linked to the bourgeois order of the Third Republic because they were his or her customers. In this instance, Lidsky's term 'réussite littéraire' is referring to the financial support writers received from middle and upper class wealthy readers. The commercial success of a writer during this period was dependant on these readers, as it was they who bought his or her novels; it was also the wealthier patrons of artists and writers who introduced them in salons.

During the 1880s the pre-existing structure of the literary field underwent major changes. The democratisation process in both the production of novels and the publication of newspapers, journals and reviews had significant ramifications for the press and the publishing business. Martha Ward argues that the changes to the press which occurred during this period were fundamental to the way in which readers and journalists alike approached the notion of criticism.<sup>14</sup> Previous to this period, reviews and newspapers had been financially dependent on the revenue brought in by subscriptions or private

<sup>12</sup> Paul Lidsky, *Les Écrivains contre la Commune* (François Maspero, 1970).

<sup>13</sup> Lidsky, p.160.

<sup>14</sup> Martha Ward, 'From art criticism to art news: journalistic reviewing in late-nineteenth-century Paris', *Art Criticism and its Institutions in Nineteenth-Century France*, ed. by Michael R. Orwicz (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp.162-181.

subvention. Newspaper sales rose dramatically as a result of increased availability and cheaper prices, and the result of this was that journals, reviews and other publications relied more on their readership for income, as most of their revenue was now earned from advertising and the sales of each issue.

According to Ward, the commercialisation of the press evolved out of two developments of the early 1880s, the period in which Barrès and Darien were both beginning their writing careers. First, in 1881 political censorship of the press was abolished along with the right of the government to request the publication of certain texts. Therefore, the responsibility for the content of the newspapers and journals lay with the writers and editors. The papers' financial dependence on their readership (both in terms of advertising and price revenue) meant that the editors had to appeal directly to them for sales. Secondly, developments in rotary printers meant that newspapers could expand to include up to eight or sixteen pages. The four-page format had previously been the norm and this increase in length required a greater diversity of articles. Therefore, not only was the content of newspapers and reviews required to appeal to a broader readership, there was also more room in the new format to accommodate a greater range of articles.

These changes in the process of book production and finance resulted in seismic shifts in the status of the writer in relation to his or her readers. The book-buying public became an agent in the literary field, with the power to make commercially successful writers. Using Bourdieu's model of the double axes of the *champ littéraire* that we discussed in chapter one (commercial success and consecration), the force which began to drive the commercial axis of the field during this period was the consumer, the reader. Emile Zola was

particularly aware of this development, as his 1880 article 'L'Argent et la littérature', published in *Le Voltaire* demonstrates. In this article, Zola supports the industrialisation of the written word, claiming that writers owed their success to their anonymous readership. As the writer created a consumable product, so they were freed by their work. Writers were no longer responsible to wealthy patrons and were no longer precariously dependent on them for financial support. According to Zola, the freedom of the author from the constraints of the patron-writer relationship resulted in a liberating, open and direct relationship between the author and the reader.

### **The role of the writer and the *champ littéraire***

During the 1880s the writer's autonomy continued to increase, resulting in the Berne Convention of 1887 where it was agreed that authors, not publishers, owned the copyright to their work. Authors had become what Gemie calls 'literary capitalists'.<sup>15</sup> Writing was now a profession rather than an indulgence, and writers were professionals rather than dilettantes. The *champ littéraire* had become a field of commerce which drew its power from the revenues generated by its readers.

The growth of the book-buying market and the effects it had upon the dynamics of the literary field was not without its critics. As Gemie argues, Barrès was one such critic of the new developments in publishing. Along with other writers, such as Ernest-Charles, Barrès challenged this new development. The insufficiency of literature alone to direct and maintain the morality of the young is a common theme in many of Barrès's fictional works. As Gemie notes,

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<sup>15</sup> Sharif Gemie, 'Authors, markets and cultural politics during the *fin-de-siècle*', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 4:1 (1996), p.47.

Barrès's 1897 novel *Les Déracinés* (the first part of his *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale* trilogy) depicts a group of young Lorraine men who are uprooted from their familial and cultural heritage through ill-advised exposure to various writers and thinkers. This demonstrates the author's concerns about the misinterpretation of literature and the effects this could have on young and misguided readers. The insufficiency of literature alone to ensure the spiritual health of the young is also evident in his earlier works. For example, his earlier trilogy, *Le Culte du moi* (1888-1891), featured a young man, Philippe, as he struggled to free himself from the *barbares* of the world through isolation and literature. His attempt is unsuccessful.

Evidently, Barrès was not in favour of the democratisation of literature heralded by Zola. He viewed the open and direct relationship between author and reader as potentially dangerous. The labels he chose to adopt during the peak of his career reflect his attitude towards the author-reader relationship. He was the 'professeur d'énergie' and the 'maître' of his readers.<sup>16</sup> Through his fiction, he aimed to lead and instruct his readers. His responsibility was not to appeal to readers in order to sell books, but to act as their mentor and guide. As a writer he had a moral responsibility to his readers, not a mandate to earn his living from the revenues of his books. It is somewhat ironic, however, that despite his reluctance to see himself as a professional writer in the mould of Zola, Barrès was a commercially successful writer. Although he was not as commercially appealing as writers such as Zola, Anatole France or Daudet, Barrès was able to make a comfortable living from his work as a journalist and novelist. Indeed, Barrès's ambition to succeed as a writer, to make himself well-

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<sup>16</sup> See René Jacquet, *Notre Maître Maurice Barrès* (P.Lamm, 1900), p.4-5.

known in his field, is evident from his earliest writings. For example, in 1884, he began to publish *Les Taches d'encre*, a review which included articles concerning literature, politics and philosophy. In the first edition of this monthly publication, Barrès prefaced the articles with a discussion of his reasons for creating this journal.

Des personnes se chagrineront peut-être de voir un jeune homme inconnu prétendre à une tâche pour laquelle se groupent le plus souvent des hommes de poids, des professeurs des classes supérieures. Mais qu'y faire ? Je vieillirai sans doute et j'entreprends cette publication précisément pour me faire connaître.<sup>17</sup>

As a young writer he was ambitious and eager to become a respected writer, one who would eventually become the 'professeur' and 'maître' of many young writers. He arrived in Paris in 1883 after attending a lycée in Nancy. As a pupil, his teacher was Auguste Burdeau on whom Barrès went on to base one of his more famous characters, Paul Bouteiller, the teacher who uprooted the group of young men in *Les Déracinés*.<sup>18</sup> As a teenager, Barrès's great friend was Stanislas de Guaita. The two boys encouraged each other to read works by Baudelaire, Flaubert and others. It was a friendship which lasted until Stanislas, who had become increasingly involved in the heady mixture of occult practices and drugs, died on 20 December 1897, much to Barrès's sorrow. Barrès left school as a 'bachelier en philosophie sans mentions'. As an eighteen-year-old student in Nancy, Barrès lodged with de Guaita and another friend Léon Sorg, at a doctor's house, rue Ravinelle. After breaking records for absenteeism at the university, and arguing with de Guaita and Sorg, Barrès wanted to leave Nancy, so he headed for Paris.

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<sup>17</sup> *Les Taches d'encre*, no. 1, November 1884.

<sup>18</sup> Burdeau went on to have an impressive political career. During the 1880s he worked for the ministry for education and then was elected as a deputy in 1885. He was a minister several times, notably under Casimir-Perier as minister for finance. He was elected as president of the chamber of deputies in July 1894 and died the following December.



As a newcomer in Paris, Barrès had the original intention of continuing his university studies. He was enrolled as a student of the Faculty of Law at the University of Nancy, but this was soon abandoned in favour of writing. He had already had articles published in the *Journal de la Meurthe et des Vosges* and in *La Jeune France* in 1882, and on his arrival in the capital he made contact with well-known writers including Leconte de Lisle (whose salon Barrès was invited to join) and also Anatole France. Barrès attended lectures given by various leading academic lights such as Louis Menard, Renan or Taine, at the Collège de France or the L'École des Beaux-Arts, all the time meeting recognised and celebrated writers of the day. Having been reconciled with de Guaita, Barrès moved with him to L'Hôtel de l'Univers, rue Cujas, near the Sorbonne and the Panthéon in the 5<sup>th</sup> arrondissement. The Quartier Latin was famous for its artists and writers and one of Barrès's first publications was a survey of the area, *Le Quartier Latin, ces messieurs, ces dames* (1888, published by Dalou, who was based at the Quai Voltaire). During this year, Barrès also had published *Huit jours chez M. Renan*, a tribute to a writer whom Barrès considered as a master. Barrès's need for such intellectual mentors on his arrival in Paris is clear from his *Mémoires*: '[l]a faiblesse de mon enfance et de ma jeunesse a été de ne pas connaître d'hommes supérieurs. C'est d'eux que j'avais soif et faim' (Cahiers, p.16). His admiration of other more senior writers like Renan is indicative of Barrès's tendency to transform those he admired into glorified versions of themselves. Those 'maîtres' who inspired his literary and political ideas were not simply admired by Barrès, but rather transfigured. He had a clear image of his status as a young writer who was learning from these greater, illustrious writers such as Renan.

Barrès's other endeavour at this time was to establish himself as a journalist. He set up *Les Taches d'encre* to promote his own mixture of politics, literature and philosophy and included ideas about race and religion.<sup>19</sup> *Les Taches d'encre* included articles which mixed literature and politics together to produce a type of metaphysical rhetoric which bears the familiar Barresian hallmarks of his later works: density of prose, piety and political persuasion.

Barrès's early years in Paris bear all the marks of a young writer who was keen to make his presence felt in the literary world, who had a vision of how this was to be achieved and, more importantly, had a specific purpose behind it. Barrès's vision of the writer was as a symbolic figurehead, a rallying point for young followers and admirers. This is a very different notion to the literary capitalist, writing for financial reward. The transfiguration of the writer in this way endows an author with symbolic capital, with power and influence over his or her reader. This power and influence resulted in the increased recognition of a writer by his or her peers in the literary world. This increase in recognition is what drives the axis of consecration in Bourdieu's model of the literary field. The stature of a writer such as Barrès could be increased in many ways. In particular, the political affiliation of a certain artist or writer could greatly affect the amount of symbolic capital he or she possessed. The recognition of this influence took place through ceremonies (for example, state funerals and burials in the Panthéon) and election to public functions (such as representatives in the Chamber of Deputies or the Senate).

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<sup>19</sup> For example: 'A cette heure seule une intelligence pouvait poursuivre et comprendre toutes les évolutions du sentiment religieux à travers les siècles, saisir l'unité de la race, du climat, de l'idéal et de tous les aspects divers d'un même principe inconnaissable, poursuivre l'humanité balbutiante dans l'âme rudimentaire des animaux. A un poète de cette heure seule il appartenait de témoigner l'empiètement incessant de l'intelligence sur la sensibilité.', *Les Taches d'encre*, January 1885, no.3, pp.24-5. In this short passage, Barrès addressed the issues of race, religion, literature and history.

In particular, such events as the funeral of Victor Hugo in May 1885 indicate the significance of writers in French political culture during this period. During his life Hugo's dedication to first the Orléanist and later the Republican political causes meant he was elected to the 1848 Assembly and, following his years of exile during the Second Empire, he was elected as member of the Chamber of Deputies and later the Sénat of the Third Republic. His involvement in political affairs certainly heightened his status as a public figure as it endowed him with a symbolic link to those regimes which he had supported. Indeed, Avner Ben-Amos argues that Hugo's funeral was part of an attempt by the Opportunist government to legitimise itself through forging a symbolic link with one the greatest figures of the nineteenth century. Hugo's funeral was one of a series which celebrated a number of famous Republican dead, including Louis Blanc (1882), Gambetta (1883), Jules Grévy (1891) and Jules Ferry (1892). Hugo was commemorated as writer, but also as a symbolic figurehead of the Opportunist Republic.<sup>20</sup> In *Les Déracinés* Barrès describes the funeral through the eyes of his young characters as they watch the cortège pass. Barrès transforms Hugo's commemoration into a symbol of the people of Paris's need for a focus for their spiritual energy. The narrator repeatedly refers to Hugo as a 'dieu' while creating a frenzied scene of hero worship.<sup>21</sup> The elevation of writers to public figures transforms them, therefore, into political and national symbols. Indeed, Barrès himself was commemorated through a state funeral in 1923, during the post-war period when several political and military figures were being venerated in this way, including Charles de Freycinet (May 1923), Pierre

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<sup>20</sup> Avner Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France 1789-1996*. (London: Oxford University Press, 2000). Ben-Amos's work draws on Pierre Nora's study of history as memory, *Les Lieux de mémoire*, 7 vols (Gallimard, 1984-92).

<sup>21</sup> See chapter 18 of *Les Déracinés*, Œuvre III.

Loti (June 1923) and Maréchal Foch (March 1929). Barrès's entry into the political and public realm transformed him into a symbolic figurehead for nationalists, Catholics and socialists alike. His vision of a writer who was able to promote his political and spiritual agenda through establishing himself in the *champ littéraire* is evident in his earliest writings and is key to understanding his purpose as a writer.

Georges Darien had a very different idea of what the role of a writer in society should be. While Barrès aimed to become a *maître* for young readers, Darien carved out a role for himself as an outsider, an isolated individualist. Darien's early career marks him out as a challenging and prickly character who rebelled against authority. Darien was a pupil of Lycée Charlemagne in Versailles between 1871 and 1880. Under his father's direction, he joined the army the year after leaving school. He had to enlist for his national service, which at this time lasted for five years, while Barrès, as a student, was exempt and was able to move to the capital during his studies. Darien signed up for 'le deuxième escadron du train', one of the transport divisions of the land army. While national service was obligatory for all men between the ages of twenty and forty, there were ways of avoiding it.<sup>22</sup> For example, if it could be proved that a man was the sole financial supporter of his family, he was exempt, as were all students of universities and seminaries. While national service had been intended by Thiers to be an experience shared by all men in order to create a sense of equality and provide a basic level of further education and training to those who could not afford to study, by the 1880s his law of 1872 had been eroded so it actually privileged the wealthy.

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<sup>22</sup> National service had been reinstated in 1872 by Thiers as a Republican response to France's military defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. It was intended to equally involve all men between the ages of 20 and 40 in the defence of the nation.

Darien's time as a soldier was far from happy and, in an early demonstration of his rebellious character, on 23 June 1883 Darien was in front of a court martial charged with insubordination. He was sentenced to spend a total of thirty-three months in a military discipline camp in the 'première compagnie de pionniers de discipline'. This camp, familiarly called Biribi, was in Tunisia and here Darien was to witness extreme brutality and violence. It was a place which affected Darien greatly and provided him with much of his material for his fiction. In particular, the novel *Biribi* was Darien's account of the place and the brutalising effect it had on the men who experienced it. Elements of real events and characters from this period of Darien's life appeared on the pages of this novel; for example, while in the camp he met Emmanuel Quesnel, a good friend, who appeared in the novel thinly disguised as Queslier. On 16 March 1886, Darien was released from the army after five years of military service, almost three of which were spent in the discipline camp. Upon his release he headed to Paris. Darien's melange of the real and the fictional was not intended to idealise himself as a writer, as Barrès's treatment of his narrator's voice did. Darien's objective was to reveal the real rather than to transform it in any way. He intended to strip away any layers of gloss from the events he had witnessed and present them to his readers in a raw, vivid form on the page.

Darien's vision of the writer as a voice testifying to the truth of events is evident right from the beginning of his career. His exit from the army and his arrival in Paris signalled a decisive move into his career as a writer and establishing himself as a dissenting voice of protest against militarism and brutality. At this time, Darien cut off contact with his family, enhancing his

isolation from his old life. It appears that it was also at this time that Darien changed his name from Adrien to Darien. Auriant claims he got the inspiration for this change from a historical novel that was out around this time called *Darien, or the Merchant Prince*, by Eliot Warburton.<sup>23</sup> While this claim cannot be proven, what is clear is that it was another step away from his family and his life as a soldier. Darien arrived in Paris friendless with little money and no family support. He moved into a room in the rue de l'Odéon, between the jardin du Luxembourg and the boulevard Saint-Germain in the 6<sup>th</sup> arrondissement. Here he began to write *Biribi*, although this was not published until 1890. During this time he also began to work in bohemian theatres and to approach publishers with his writing. One publisher, Savine, agreed to produce his work but refused to publish *Biribi*, a potentially anti-militarist work. Instead, Darien wrote *Bas les cœurs!* in twenty-six days and it was published by Savine in December 1889. Following the publication of Darien's novella, *Florentine*, in *La Revue indépendante* in January 1890, Savine finally agreed to publish *Biribi* in April 1890 after the appearance of Lucien Descaves's *Sous-offs* early that same year, and modifications made by Darien to the text.

*Florentine*, often overlooked by critics, shows early signs of Darien's use of slang in dialogue, which is so in evidence in *Biribi*. The setting of the novella is also Tunisia. The dialogue between the narrator and his friend Vendredeuil as the travel through the desert is reminiscent of much of the discussions between Queslier and Froissard:

- Sais-tu pourquoi les kilomètres ont quinze cents mètres en Tunisie ?... Non ?... Je vais te dire. C'est un type de l'Administration qui m'a expliqué ça. Pour faire une route, le Génie militaire commence par prendre la distance d'un endroit à un autre, à vue de nez et en droite ligne. Ainsi, du Kef à Bir-Kermous : vingt-quatre kilomètres. Il fait tailler vingt-quatre bornes et les plante le long du sentier qu'ont tracé les Bicos. Le sentier, avec ses

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<sup>23</sup> See Auriant, *Darien et l'inhumaine comédie* (Brussels: Ambassade du Livre, 1966).

crochets, a bien trente-cinq kilomètres, et tu comprends que si l'on plaçait les bornes à mille mètres l'une à l'autre, il en manquerait pas mal. C'est pour ça qu'on les met à quinze cents mètres... et pour ça que nous en avons encore pour deux heures au moins...<sup>24</sup>

Right from the outset of this early work, the rough nature of the language is striking, as is Darien's talent for ridiculing the army and its rule-making. The early texts of Darien demonstrate his view of the writer's role that would remain with him throughout his career: a writer must protest against injustice, reveal the truth and undermine authority wherever possible. The use of slang and raw, familiar language to perform these tasks was, of course, taken from other anarchist writers of the day. Indeed, Pouget's *Le Père Peinard* published many articles which used working class vernacular to express its rebellion. For Darien, as for other anarchist writers, the use of *argot* meant that the writer could address his or her potential reader in a direct, familiar way, in the language of the streets. There was also a blatant promotion of rebellion against the rules of the written language and an embrace of spontaneity and of autonomy. Darien's use of slang and naturalistic language was not only addressing the issue of class; it was also politicising his text.

Darien began his career as a writer as he meant to go on. In 1891, he contributed articles to anarchist revues such as Zo d'Axa's *L'En dehors*, and he published his own revue *L'Escarmouche* in 1893, to which bohemian illustrators like Toulouse-Lautrec, Willette and Ibels contributed. He had begun to establish himself as a voice protesting from the peripheries of the literary field. While Barrès had begun to climb the literary ladder to commercial success and respectability, Darien had positioned himself amongst the rebels and rule-breakers who rejected the authority which Barrès hoped to gain. As we shall see,

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<sup>24</sup> 'Florentine', *La Revue Indépendante*, no.1 (1885), p.1.

Darien continued to privilege those characters who reject the authority of the state. For example, in *Le Voleur* (1897) the narrator is a thief and a swindler. Darien's own voice is transformed into those of the child rejecting the authority of his parents, the prisoner and the criminal.

### **Publishers, politics and the changing *champ littéraire***

Therefore, in the early works of both Barrès and Darien, there is a mixture of the personal and the political. Their ideological viewpoints determined their ambitions as writers in the context of the literary field. Darien's individualist anarchism and Barrès's developing nationalism and socialism also informed their narrative techniques and moulded the issues which each writer sought to address in his early works. The development of their political ideas is, therefore, right at the heart of their status as writers. As both writers firmly established themselves within their own niches in the literary field, their political beliefs also took on more definition. Their political engagement as writers during the late 1880s and early 1890s coincided with the period of their careers when both men were seeking to maintain good relationships with their publishers.

The landscape of cultural politics was in flux during this period, and Barrès's and Darien's involvement in Boulangism and anarchist activity respectively reflects this shift. The previous generation of writers, those who were working in the early years of the Third Republic, interacted with political ideas in a very different way to their successors. As we have seen, Paul Lidsky argues that as a result of the changes in the financial support of writers around the 1880s and the increasing autonomy this created within the literary field, authors were more at liberty to appeal to their readers rather than support the political status quo in their works. Furthermore, these developments within the



literary field were compounded by the challenges to the stability of the Third Republic. In the years following the Commune, reaction against the bloody uprising was strong amongst writers who had little else in common. However, as later challenges to the legitimacy of the regime were more fragmented, what Lidsky terms 'les clivages' in cultural politics were less polarised than those of the previous generation. Instead of supporting either open rebellion or legitimate government, a greater number of political alternatives were available: pacifism or militarism, *laïcité* or clericalism, republicanism or monarchism.<sup>25</sup> The combination of these changes in the *champ littéraire* and the developments within the stability of the regime meant that writers not only had more freedom to express and promote political ideas, but also the ideas they chose to endorse in their works were more varied. As Lidsky puts it: 'l'écrivain peut, à l'occasion des nouvelles questions soulevées, choisir son camp.'<sup>26</sup>

Both Maurice Barrès and Georges Darien were engaged with this process of 'choosing one's camp'. The evolution of their particular brands of politics had implications for their choice of publishers and for which newspapers and reviews they wrote. The publisher with whom Darien linked himself was also active in the production of politicised writing. Darien signed with Albert Savine (1859-1914) in 1888. While Savine was well-known in radical political circles for publishing political tracts and books, his politics were very different to Darien's. Savine was a leader in the field of publishing anti-Semitic literature. In the space of seven years he had published more than fifty such books and leaflets, and he was well acquainted with Edouard Drumont, the author of *La France Juive*, which sold over 100,000 copies after its publication in 1886.

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<sup>25</sup> Lidsky, p.162.

<sup>26</sup> Lidsky, p.162.

Darien's relationship with Savine was not an easy one. There were obvious differences between the anti-militarist, individualist politics of Darien and the nationalist fervour of Savine's anti-Semitism. Compounding these profound differences was the difficult nature of Darien's personality. He was stubborn, fiery and very difficult to reason with. He and Savine frequently clashed over money and the content of his novels.

This conflict between writer and publisher was also food for Darien's fiction. The characters of L'Ogre and Rapine in *Les Pharisiens* (1891) are obvious and bitter parodies of Drumont and Savine. This novel, published with Genonceaux in 1891 after Darien had left Savine, attacked not only the anti-Semitic tone of Drumont's literature and Savine's willingness to publish it, but also what he perceived as their materialistic motivation: 'l'Argent avait tué tout – tout, même la Pensée' (*Voleurs*, p.963). The aptly named Vendredeuil (a name taken from *La Florentine*) is a struggling writer who attempts to write an anti-Semitic book for money but cannot bring himself to publish it. *Les Pharisiens*, above all, is an attack on the political hypocrisy that Darien believed was inherent in the publication of such works for money. It is clear that Darien did not publish his works in order to make a profit. *Les Pharisiens* is emblematic not only of Darien's personal difficulties, but of his view of the publisher's role and his abhorrence of the business of publishing.

What also contributed to Darien's difficult and often bitter relationships with his publisher was his personality. Darien's awkward character was a significant obstacle to success for the author, whether as a commercial or consecrated writer. It is clear from correspondence that Darien was not an easy writer to get along with. Letters between him and Savine often have a sarcastic

tone and Darien was fairly demanding. For example, in a letter dated May 1889, when he was trying to arrange the publication of *Biribi*, Darien wrote: 'Monsieur, Je m'étonne de ne pas encore avoir reçu de vous un mot m'annonçant la mise en composition de mon volume.' Again, just over a month later Darien wrote: 'Monsieur, Je suis las de me présenter chez vous sans vous y trouver...'.<sup>27</sup> This difficult relationship ended within a year. His stubborn nature and the bizarre way in which he dealt with business associates did not make him an attractive prospect for potential publishers. Indeed, even those with whom he collaborated most closely bore the brunt of his anger, as this extract from Victor Méric's account of Darien's relationship with Zo d'Axa demonstrates:

Son caractère bouillant, son insociabilité notoire lui valaient maintes déconvenues. Il eut, notamment, un duel avec son directeur, cela au lendemain d'un article fougueux que Zo d'Axa avait écrit contre ce genre de sport. Darien récolta un coup d'épée, je crois, ce qui ne l'empêcha nullement de continuer sa collaboration au journal.<sup>28</sup>

While duelling between journalists appears to have been fairly common, Darien and Zo d'Axa took their quarrel to ridiculous extremes.<sup>29</sup> It demonstrates two aspects of Darien's character. It shows his fiery nature and also his willingness to go to extremes for his convictions.

The struggles he encountered in publishing his works only deepened his sense of isolation, as feelings of bitterness and betrayal were galvanised into anarchist rhetoric of distrust of organised politics and the promotion of individualism. The combination of problematic relationships and the hypocrisy Darien believed was inherent in some political publications contributed to his growing distrust of organised politics and the process of the production of

<sup>27</sup> As quoted by P.-V Stock, in *Mémoire d'un éditeur* (Stock, 1935), p.64.

<sup>28</sup> Victor Méric, *Coulisses et tréteaux : à travers la jungle politique et littéraire* (Valois, 1931), pp.46-47.

<sup>29</sup> See Guy de Maupassant, *Bel Ami* (Flammarion, 1993). For example, in chapter seven of *Bel Ami* (18??) Maupassant describes a duel between two quarrelling journalists. This duel also ends with no serious injury to either writer.

political texts. From *Les Pharisiens*, we can see that he clearly believed that political fiction was only relevant and powerful if it was honest and produced with integrity by a writer who had had experience of the issues he or she was addressing. The manner in which he wrote his own fiction at this time, *Biribi* and *Bas les cœurs!*, is also testament to his developing belief in producing works which revealed the truth of his own experiences in order to provoke the reader to change their political views.

Barrès's developing political convictions also had significant effects on the choices he made in his literary career during this critical period. During the period of the late 1880s and early 1890s, he was writing the first two major trilogies of his career, *Le Culte du moi* and *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale*. Both of these works reflect the galvanising of his ideological rhetoric. The first major political influence on his life during this period was General Boulanger (as we have seen in chapter one). As a political force Boulangism was active from 1886, when the General took up his post as War Minister, until September 1891, when Boulanger committed suicide at the grave of his mistress, Madame de Bonnemains. By 1885, the Opportunist party was in control of most of the institutions which governed French political life. Right-wing opposition to the centrist government had altered following the death of the last Bourbon claimant to the French throne, the Comte de Chambord, in 1883. With this last pretender dead, monarchists were unified with other sections of the right wing, including the Bonapartists, while the republican right-wing opponents of the government did not oppose them on constitutional grounds, but rather disagreed with them on aspects of policy. Boulanger's bullish reaction to an increase in tension between France and Germany made him popular with many, including those

left-wing nationalists inspired by the Jacobin past to seek the glory of France. Paul Déroulède founded the Ligue des Patriotes in 1886, with which Barrès had strong links, and was a great admirer of Boulanger. After the Schnabelé Affair in April 1887, Boulanger's popularity increased and cheap biographies of the General were on sale all over Paris.<sup>30</sup> When a new government was formed with Maurice Rouvier as Prime Minister and without Boulanger, the General's supporters, those from the right and left of the political spectrum and disillusioned with the government, rallied around him. His departure in July 1887 for Clermont-Ferrand, where he was to act as a division commander, prompted a demonstration at the Gare de Lyon which he did not act upon and which was quickly dispersed. Barrès fictionalised this demonstration in *L'Appel au soldat* (1900), the second part of his *Roman de l'énergie nationale* trilogy. Both this novel and the third part of the series, *Leurs figures* (1902), were an attempt by Barrès to portray Boulanger's rise and fall as he perceived it: the rise and fall of a French national hero. This was an attempt at writing a sort of history of the period from the perspective of a group of young Lorraine men who had come to Paris to seek their fortune. These retrospective interpretations of events transformed Boulanger from an aging, rather indecisive military man into a heroic, virile, strong leader whose potential was never realised.

Boulanger stood, unsuccessfully, as a candidate in the presidential elections of 1888. In March of that year, *La Cocarde*, the official Boulangist paper, was set up. Barrès wrote numerous articles for this paper, and was involved in its production right up until 1895, when it ceased publication. The

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<sup>30</sup> 21 April, 1887, a French frontier official, named Schnabelé, was enticed across the German border and subsequently arrested for espionage. Although he was eventually released, the episode worsened an already tense diplomatic situation between France and Bismarck's Germany.

editor of *La Cocarde* was Labruyère, a former editor of Vallès's *Le Cri du Peuple*. The following extract from *Le Cri du Peuple*, 18 April 1888, demonstrates not only that this voice of the left was sympathetic to Boulanger's project at this time, but also that his supporters believed that he would crystallise his policies to form a cohesive and viable opposition to the government: '[r]ien n'a encore été décidé au sujet de l'attitude que prendra le général, mais on peut être sûr qu'il saisira la première occasion pour exposer ses idées dans un discours-programme, où il sera fortement question de la dissolution de la Chambre et de la révision de la Constitution.'<sup>31</sup>

Barrès's journalism at this time shows his developing ideas on national identity as well as his passionate support for the General. He had also been travelling, visiting Italy and Spain, and his belief in the possibility of European spiritual harmony is evident in his writing at this time. For example, in *Le Voltaire* (a paper for which he wrote 68 articles in all between 1886 and 1888) Barrès wrote this in January 1888:

Tous les pédagogues se plaisent à commenter deux maximes, qui sont en effet intéressantes. La première est d'un Français: «l'univers est une espèce de livre dont on n'a lu que la première page quand on n'a vue que son pays» - Je crois bien que, pour l'Europe tout au moins, voilà un jugement qui n'est plus vrai. La description des mœurs de l'Europe ferait un livre dont toutes les pages se ressembleraient. Mais la seconde maxime demeurera toujours exacte. Elle est d'un Latin disant: «En traversant les mers, tu ne changes pas ta vie, mais seulement ton ciel» - Eh bien! n'est pas cela nous suffit?<sup>32</sup>

Barrès was developing his nationalist thought and rhetoric, and the fluctuations of this development were described in the pages of the papers and reviews for which he wrote. His commitment to Boulangism was also increasing and in the elections for the Chamber of Deputies in January 1889, Barrès stood as a

<sup>31</sup> *Le Cri du Peuple*, 18 April, 1888, p.1.

<sup>32</sup> Maurice Barrès, 'Allons au soleil', *Le Voltaire*, 26 January 1888. This article and others like it, including 'La querelle des nationalistes et des cosmopolites', *Le Figaro*, 4 July 1892, demonstrate the important point that Barrès's nationalism was developing during this period and was markedly different to his post-Dreyfus beliefs.

candidate for Nancy and won a seat. He also began to write for *Le Courier de l'Est* at this time, including a series of articles which dealt with the perceived anti-intellectualism of Boulanger, and Barrès's own socialist beliefs.<sup>33</sup> He was also developing his spiritual approach to politics and this is reflected in his first trilogy of novels, *Le Culte du moi*, which was published between 1888 and 1891. These three novels, *Sous l'œil des barbares* (1888), *Un Homme libre* (1889), and *Le Jardin de Bérenice* (1891) set out his theory of the self. Through his creation of fictional representatives of his own beliefs, Barrès played out the effects of self-imposed isolation from others and from one's *pays*. These novels are packed with dense Barresian narration which meanders its way through arguments of philosophy, religion, history and politics. His ultimate conclusion is his vision of a collective, spiritualised self rooted in the cultural heritage of France.

Between his arrival in Paris and the publication of *Le Culte du moi* trilogy, Barrès was establishing himself as a literary and political figure. He was also developing his theories of the self, the nation and the political world. While he manoeuvred himself into a position in the literary field which gave him kudos as he published his first major trilogy, he was also developing theories which combined such literary work with his political activity. While Darien's approach to political art was to reveal the harsh truth of his experiences to promote his political activities and theories, Barrès's approach was to develop a didactic, argumentative style of narration in both his fiction and his journalism. It was not simply that Barrès and Darien were using literature as a means to promote very different political viewpoints, but rather that these different political viewpoints

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<sup>33</sup> In *Le Courier de l'Est*, 13 February 1889, Barrès wrote about his aversion for pretentious students. In an article dated 24 November the same year, he declared himself as a socialist: 'Socialisme! c'est le mot où la France a mis son espoir [...] Soyons donc socialistes!'

were themselves producing contrasting styles of narration and argument. The choices that both of these men made in the creation of their literature, the journals they worked for and the publishers they worked with, greatly affected their positions within the literary field.

### **The consequences of status in *le champ littéraire***

The consequences of these choices affected both writers profoundly. The double axes of Bourdieu's *champ littéraire*, commerce and consecration, both depended on such decisions. An author could be successful in both commercial and critical terms, gaining financial reward for his work and artistic approval from institutions such as the academies. In *La Vie littéraire à la Belle Époque* Géraldi Leroy and Julie Bertrand-Sabiani devote a chapter to the earnings of authors at this time. They include Anatole France as a spectacular case of high earnings. His editions, re-editions, deluxe editions and illustrated editions all brought in revenue. By August 1902, his personal earnings for the year were 57,678 francs. By the end of December 1905, this had grown to 160,654 francs. Not only do these figures demonstrate France's growing status and commercial success as a writer, but they are also a useful benchmark to compare with Darien's success, or rather lack of it. Anatole France's spectacular financial success is such a contrast to the financially precarious situation of Georges Darien.

While France was steadily building up his reputation and earnings, Darien was scrabbling around for the means to support himself. After leaving Savine, Darien signed with Genonceaux and then with Stock, another small publishing house, for the grand sum of 100 francs advance on his novel *L'Ogre*, which would eventually be published as *Les Pharisien*s. This sum did increase after



the partially warm reception of *Le Voleur* (1897) by critics like Ouida. When he wrote *L'Épaulette* in 1902, he obtained a 1000 franc advance for the novel. His novels did not sell well, however, as this excerpt from a letter dated 12 February 1902 from Stock to Darien shows:

J'ai reçu vos deux lettres me demandant des comptes. J'avoue tout d'abord que je ne comprends pas. Quels comptes puisque vous avez toujours été payé dès l'apparition de vos volumes et qu'il n'a été fait aucune nouvelle édition d'eux? Alors? Est-ce le compte des exemplaires de chacun d'eux restant encore en magasin? Je le veux bien, mais ce ne serait qu'un renseignement purement amical et qui ne pouvait que martyriser votre amour-propre d'auteur. Le voulez-vous, ce renseignement? Bien cordialement. P.-V. Stock.<sup>34</sup>

His work, though appreciated by a few socialist and anarchist critics, was not read or purchased by much of the reading public. The relationship between Darien and Stock worsened, to the point of threats, as this letter from Darien, dated 23 August 1903, shows: 'Monsieur Stock, J'ai reçu votre carte. Voici ma réponse: si vous ne publiez pas mon roman en octobre prochain, je vous tuerai. Voici deux ans que vous vous jouez de moi. [...] J'attendrai jusqu'au mois d'octobre; et si alors mon roman n'est pas publié par vous, je vous exécuterai.'<sup>35</sup> Darien's difficult personality created tension between himself and Stock, and his publisher, who did not seem to take the death threat seriously, viewed the writer as somewhat of a mystery: 'Darien, en effet, était un curieux homme, un personnage énigmatique, même inquiétant; sa vie a toujours été des plus mystérieuses; personne n'a pu la percer ou l'expliquer.'<sup>36</sup>

This mystery was compounded by Darien's exile from France. After the government began to criminalise anarchist activity following the period of *attentats*, Darien left France for England in 1894.<sup>37</sup> During his time in London,

<sup>34</sup> As quoted by Auriant in *Darien et l'inhumaine comédie*, p.127.

<sup>35</sup> Stock, *Mémoire d'un éditeur*, p.94.

<sup>36</sup> Stock, p.60.

<sup>37</sup> Between 1892 and 1894 there were thirteen attacks on institutes and symbols of authority in which ten people were killed, including the President Sadi Carnot. The most infamous of the

he continued to publish, including his most complex novel to date, *Le Voleur*, which was published by Stock in 1897. While certain critics such as Rachilde wrote favourable reviews of *Le Voleur*, its commercial failure is evident from the correspondence between Stock and Darien. Stock explained to the writer that two years had not been long enough to sell the thousand copies of the novel which they had produced. During 1898 Darien also saw failure in the theatre. His play, *L'Ami de l'ordre*, which was set during the time of the Commune, was performed at the Grand Guignol, but was not a success. Darien also married while he was in England. In 1899, he married Suzanne Abresh, an English woman whose family had German roots. While it is difficult to pinpoint Darien's location during these years of exile, the 1901 census shows that he was still in London at this time, living in the St. Pancras area. Darien's marriage to a foreign woman, his exile in a foreign land, his continued difficulties in publishing his works and the commercial and critical failure of many of the works he did manage to get published meant that Darien was truly isolated during this period of his life.

While Darien was struggling with publishers, Barrès was building up his reputation and establishing himself as a significant writer. By the mid-1890's Barrès had already published a major trilogy, *Le Culte du moi* (1888-1891), successfully stood for election as deputy for Nancy in 1889 and started

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perpetrators of these attacks was Ravachol (François Koenigstein, 1859-1893). In 1892, he began a series of attacks on judges and attorneys. He had escaped from police custody after being arrested for murder, grave-robbing and other offences. The press reacted with numerous articles discussing him, including Paul Adam's 'Éloge de Ravachol', *Les Entretiens politiques et littéraires*, July 1892 and Octave Mirbeau's 'Ravachol', *L'Endehors*, 1<sup>st</sup> May 1892. Similarly, Emile Henry's execution in May 1894 after he was convicted of bombing the Café Terminus, inspired Barrès to write an article in which he expressed his admiration of the anarchist's proud demeanour. The article appeared in *Le Journal* on May 22, 1894. The government reacted strongly to the *attentats* and five anarchists were put to death, including Ravachol and Henry. The *lois scélérats* were also introduced, which extended prosecution to those who indirectly incited violence in the press and also those who apologised for it afterwards. Many anarchist writers such as Darien and Zo d'Axa fled to London to escape prosecution.

contributing on a regular basis to *Le Figaro* in 1890. He had also married. His public persona was being created through socialising in the salons of wealthy Parisians, through publishing articles in well-known journals and through successfully producing well-received novels. His *Cahiers* make it clear that he often spent time with famous writers, taking part in soirées and dinners. His work was garnering more praise, and his status as an important writer was recognised when he was invited to join the Académie Française in 1906. This extract from an entry to his *Cahiers* dated 7 December 1897, entitled 'Premier dîner Balzac chez Durand', demonstrates the level of literary circles Barrès was moving in at this time: 'Moralité: Zola et Bourget parlant le plus. Daudet semblait souffrir. On coupait France. C'est lui que j'ai le plus apprécié. Je le retrouvais après un si long temps. Il y a derrière ses idées un profond, un empire de rêve. Il a la poésie. Je vois son scepticisme, il est à profondeur d'humanité' (*Cahiers*, p.96). Here we see a man who was on good terms with those who operated in the upper echelons of the Parisian literary hierarchy. In commercial terms, Zola and Daudet were two of the most successful authors of their day, while France was a consecrated, well-respected writer. Barrès was truly fraternising with the most popular and well-known authors of the day. It is also interesting to note Barrès's attitude to these writers. He clearly admired France the most. Barrès appears to have seen in Anatole France those qualities which he prized most in a writer: scepticism, poetry and profundity. In this brief portrait of France, Barrès reveals his perception of the persona of a great writer: an aloof, perceptive figure who has profound ideas expressed in poetical language. Here we see Barrès describing a persona which he himself strove to embody.

Barrès was a writer who was aware of posterity and wished to leave behind a literary heritage, and this extended to his own private thoughts and musings. Barrès's *Cahiers* are a curious mixture of the public writer and the private man. There are entries about his speeches, articles, thoughts on other writers or issues of the day, meetings with celebrated thinkers and influential figures of the Parisian literary field. Side by side with such entries are much more personal jottings concerning the death of his parents, his love for his family and his passion for his home. The first volume of Barrès's *Cahiers* appeared in 1929, six years after his death. Reading the preface to the 1963 edition of the *Cahiers*, which is introduced by Philippe Barrès, Maurice's son, the reader is made aware of the reasons for this publication:

Ses familiers l'ont entendu souvent exprimer le désir que, s'il disparaissait avant d'avoir pu terminer son œuvre, les *Cahiers* fussent publiés. Maurice Barrès ne se trompait pas, en exprimant cette volonté. Depuis 1929, date de la parution du premier tome des *Cahiers*, ces pages non composées ont pris dans son œuvre une place de premier plan. (*Cahiers*, p.vi)

Barrès was aware of posterity. He wanted to leave something of his private self for the reading public. Barrès also attempted to write his autobiography. In his *Mémoires* Barrès detailed his childhood and youth, using the tone of an old writer relaying his wisdom to the generations which would follow. In October 1910, on the subject of writing his memoirs, he included this entry in his *cahiers*: 'Mes Mémoires. – Pourquoi j'ai été écrivain. Je voulais le succès, construire une vie brillante, émouvante. Pourtant je serais injuste envers moi-même si je rapportais uniquement à cette ambition tout ce qui me détermina à écrire. Je n'ai rien apporté dans mon œuvre de cette époque qui ne reposât sur un fonds d'enthousiasme' (*Cahiers*, p.565). This demonstrates Barrès's dual motivation to write: to achieve greatness and to be remembered, while also effectively conveying his message, his beliefs about life, death, country, family

and politics. Barrès was committed to his writing as part of his system of beliefs, a system that was based on cultural heritage and respect for familial and regional roots. Writing was, therefore, a method of relaying his beliefs to generations which followed. His commitment to his ideological message meant he was aware of the larger significance of leaving something to posterity and his belief was that the sure way to achieve this was to become a writer of standing within the literary community.

### **Reaction to the works of Barrès and Darien**

For Barrès, the result of his networking, his ideology and the sermon-like qualities of his fiction and journalism was fame, recognition and even adulation. His speeches, articles and novels brought admiration and a group of devoted followers, over whom he held immense influence. He had become the 'maître' he had set out to be as a young writer. This is evident in letters between Barrès and Mary Duclaux. Duclaux, also known as Mary Robinson, was a British poet whom the *Times Literary Supplement* calls 'one of the previously unacknowledged heroines of the British literary establishment.'<sup>38</sup> She was married to Emile Duclaux, who was the director of the Institut Pasteur. Mary Duclaux was a prolific literary critic, and wrote many articles in the early issues of the *Times Literary Supplement*. She specialized in reviewing French novels, including the works of Marcel Proust, Pierre Loti, Paul Bourget, the Comtesse de Noailles, Jules Renard, André Gide, Ernest Renan, and of course Barrès. A letter dated May 1910 demonstrates the respect she and others had for Barrès: 'Cher Monsieur, Je vous ennuie avec mes jeunes auteurs. Mais vous êtes leur

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<sup>38</sup> <http://www.tls.psmmedia.com/first1.htm>

dieu; un mot de vous comble leurs rêves, et pourrait même les orienter dans une autre voie.<sup>39</sup> It was a relationship of mutual appreciation which lasted until Barrès died. In 1922, Barrès wrote: 'Combien je vous remercie de la belle page que vous me donnez dans le *Times*. Quel encouragement à écrire qu'un tel appui et qu'une si parfaite compréhension.'<sup>40</sup>

Barrès also had several disciples who revered him as a literary and political master, such as René Jacquet, whose work, *Notre Maître Maurice Barrès* was published in 1900. Jacquet's devotion and admiration which are so evident in this work were typical of those young writers who viewed Barrès as their mentor. In his preface to his celebration of Barrès, Jacquet wrote:

Les jeunes gens sur lesquels M. Barrès a agi n'ont pas parlé de lui encore. Il a été mieux que la lettre, l'idéologue, l'écrivain que l'on a discuté il y a une demi-douzaine d'années, - il a été notre *éducateur*. Il a été notre professeur d'*énergie*... ensuite nous avons fait de cette énergie ce que nous avons pu - ou nous en ferons ce que nous pourrons... Mais il a su être notre maître sans rien nous prendre de notre initiative... et nous ne lui en saurons jamais assez de reconnaissance.<sup>41</sup>

There are stylistic resonances in Jacquet's praise of his mentor with Barrès's own rhetoric. Barrès's role as mentor is compared to that of the role of 'professeur d'énergie', a reference to the role fulfilled in Barrès's *Roman de l'énergie nationale* trilogy by such figures as Napoleon. The role Barrès had hoped to create for himself through *Les Déracinés* had come to life. Barrès's politically engaged writing inspired admiration and loyalty, praise and respect, establishing him as a leading political writer of his day.

The work of Georges Darien did not provoke such affection or loyalty. His novels did inspire the occasional positive review, mainly from reviewers who shared his status as a writer on the edge of the *champ littéraire*. The extremity of his political convictions and the fictionalization of these views

<sup>39</sup> Mary F. Robinson, *Mary Duclaux et Maurice Barrès : lettres échangées* (Grasset, 1959), p.49.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p.64.

<sup>41</sup> Jacquet, pp.4-5.

inspired either sympathy or severe criticism, as the following two reviews of *Biribi* demonstrate. Séverine wrote in support of Darien's stance about the army: 'Il n'est pas possible que des faits semblables à ceux qu'il raconte demeurent impunis...Ce serait une honte pour notre pays s'il ne s'élevait pas, à de semblables révélations, un grand cri de honte et de colère.' In contrast, Fontanelle had this opinion of Jean Froissard (the narrator of *Biribi*), expressed in his review in the *Gazette de France*: 'Ce triste héros n'est qu'un malfaiteur de la pire espèce, et le lecteur, en lisant ses récriminations, ne trouve qu'une chose: c'est qu'il n'a pas été assez puni!' <sup>42</sup> Such contrasting reactions to the same piece of work demonstrate the divisive nature of not only the style of Darien's writing, but, more significantly, of the nature of his political beliefs. Indeed, his style of writing, and the issues addressed in his works, cannot be separated from Darien's politics. Just as Barrès's sermon-like narrative technique is reflective of his belief in his position as an important nationalist writer, so too the innovations of Darien's prose, largely written from the perspectives of outsiders or marginalised characters, reflects his anarchist, individualist political ideology.

Furthermore, while Barrès created the persona of the 'maître' for himself, Darien's individualism required the writer to reject any form of authority of other writers or mentors. The artist alone had the authority over his or her work. From his earliest writings about the anarchist novelist, it is clear that Darien believed the role of the writer to be a force for individual expression and action. Before an argument with Zo d'Axa caused him to cease writing for *L'Endehors*, Darien wrote two articles entitled 'Le roman anarchiste'. In the second of these articles, he made it clear that he abhorred the admiration of those writers whom

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<sup>42</sup> As quoted by Auriant in *Darien et l'inhumaine comédie*, p.46.

he regarded as belonging to the past: 'En avant, ceux qui ont du sang dans les veines! Le temps des saliveurs est passé. Il n'y a plus de pontifes ni de disciples; il n'y plus de Vieux ni de Jeunes. Il y a des Morts et des Vivants. Qu'on enterre les Morts! Que les Vivants vivent!'<sup>43</sup> A revolution of the literary world was required. For the individualist writer, the literary field was no longer necessary. An artist was responsible to their own will alone and the work produced by a novelist should not be influenced by the work of other writers, but rather written in response to the experiences of the author alone. According to Darien, for the anarchist novelist the act of writing was an act of rebellion and the assertion of the autonomy of the individual.

The development of Darien's individualism in the early 1890s and his theory of rebellion through creating a text was a recipe for commercial and critical failure as an author. The reaction of reviewers and other authors was inconsequential to Darien. The more Darien's work was explicitly political, the more unappealing it appears to have been for publishers. Throughout his career, his works did not become any more palatable for potential publishers. Darien's prickly character, his refusal to play a part in the literary field, the violence of the message he presented in his books combined with his physical exile from the Parisian literary sphere meant that by the turn of the century he had great difficulty in finding a publisher for *La Belle France*. It is a powerful and bitter portrait of French society in which Darien condemned such social institutions as the Catholic Church, the army and popular beliefs such as nationalism. In a letter dated 23 June 1900, when Stock is still refusing to publish this particular work, he wrote that one of his reasons for turning it down was: 'parce qu'elle a

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<sup>43</sup> 'Le roman anarchiste', 2, *L'Endehors*, no.25 (22 October 1891), p.2.



été refusée par tous mes confrères.'<sup>44</sup> Stock finally agreed to publish *La Belle France* in 1900, after much badgering on the part of the persistent novelist. Darien was aware that it would not be a popular book, as he indicated in his preface:

L'éditeur, que je remercie d'avoir publié un volume dans le succès duquel il ne saurait croire, avait complètement raison. Un pareil livre ne peut pas être vendu, ne peut pas être lu en France. Ce qui l'attend, c'est le silence: c'est le mutisme de la sottise et de la lâcheté; c'est un enterrement, religieux et civil, de première classe. (Voleurs. p.1161)

The opposition which Darien encountered, whether it was directed at his political activities or his fiction, seems to have provoked him to become increasingly persistent and unrelenting in his political and literary programme. His tone in his preface to *La Belle France*, while acknowledging his book will not be read or bought, is defiant: 'je persiste à crier, seulement: A bas la France d'aujourd'hui!' (Voleurs. p.1161). The book was met with critical silence and sold less than his previous publication, *Le Voleur*. This persistence in the face of adversity also resonates with Darien's political beliefs. His commitment to the rights of the individual and his belief in revolt against any form of organised politics inspired not only a belief in direct action against the opposition anarchist activities met, but also inspired Darien to continue writing and attempting to get published in the face of opposition from publishers and critics.

Darien's experience of isolation within the literary sphere was increasing, therefore, during a period in his life when his political beliefs were becoming more defined and more clearly evident in his writing. At this time, he was in exile in London, followed by a stay in Brussels in 1902, which further compounded this isolation. While in Britain Darien was getting more involved in the anti-militarist movement, publishing *Can We Disarm?* in 1899. This was

<sup>44</sup> Stock, *Mémoire d'un éditeur*, p.86

a pamphlet written in collaboration with Joseph McCabe, a former Franciscan monk who had turned to Rationalism and the National Secular Society. The main point made in the pamphlet is that in a capitalist society, where militarism is bound up with the economy, the country cannot afford to disarm. The only hope there is to destroy militarism, Darien and McCabe concluded, is if intensified arming incensed the poorer workers to revolt.

Darien's involvement with the anti-militarist movement continued into the early years of the twentieth century, attending the 1904 congress of L'Association Antimilitariste Internationale des Travailleurs in Amsterdam. Here he was elected to the committee in charge of the promotion of the new International. However, he soon began to disagree with other delegates and he saw the congress as a failure. He became increasingly involved in syndicalism over the next few years, particularly with the militant Union syndicale des Artistes dramatiques which he formed in 1909. Although he supported various theories, he often found it difficult to get on with the organisations which supported these theories, and usually left after a disagreement with another member, as he did in Amsterdam. Here we see again the self-imposed isolation which was a continuing feature not of only Darien's literary career, but also his political activity. While he was willing to be involved in various political organisations such as the anti-militarist, Darien was not able to sustain such involvement. His unwillingness to compromise, his belief in the cause of the individual against organised politics and his rash personality led him to act as a political loner.

The cause of the individual was becoming increasingly central to Darien's political beliefs. During the years leading up to World War I, Darien

became increasingly enthusiastic about the theories of Henry George. George's most famous work was *Progress and Poverty* (1879), which was first published in French in 1887. It was a popular work, particularly amongst British utopian socialists like William Morris, and it had sold two million copies by 1905. His basic theory was abandoning of rental of land and the introduction of a Single Tax, levied once a year to the State, in relation to the condition of the land one was using. This was a rejection of centralisation or nationalisation of land in favour of a system which allows the individual to work his or her own land, with checks put in place to make sure that this was done efficiently and usefully. Georges Darien attempted to publicise these ideas in his *Revue de l'impôt unique*, which he began in 1911. There is evidence that Darien was aware of George's work in the late 1890's. He discussed the idea of the Single Tax in *La Belle France*, which was published by Stock in 1900: 'Il faut donc, afin que la taxation trouve une base raisonnable, qu'il y ait un impôt direct, et qu'il n'y ait qu'un seul; et il est impossible que cet impôt soit établi sur autre chose que sur la valeur de la terre' (Voleurs, p.1327).

Darien's ideology had developed from an individualist reaction against his early bitter experiences in the army to a complex mixture of individualism, rebellion and recognition of the necessity of a minimal level of centralised social organisation. His support of a single form of taxation indicates his acknowledgment that while an individual should be free from all other interference by the state, some form of collective organisation was needed. Had Darien's ideology developed into a form of anarchist communism in which free individuals associated with each other in a utopian vision of harmony? His insistence on the individual's right to protect his or her own interests above all

else indicates that this was not the case. As Walter Redfern puts it: 'it is every man for himself in Darien's Georgist utopia, which is not the lazing kind but the hard-working kind; the half-hearted, or the accidentally weak, go to the wall.'<sup>45</sup> Darien's ideology had not evolved into a desire for any form of collectivity. Indeed, his Georgism was another facet to his lasting vision of a society in which the individual is free from all constraint other than his or her own will. Darien's support of the single tax is a recognition of the pragmatic steps which would be necessary for such a society to be established.

Ultimately, Darien was an individualist above all else. As Valia Gréau concludes in her assessment of Darien as a militant anarchist, his lasting political commitment was to the liberty of the individual.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, his affiliation with Georgism is his longest lasting political commitment to a specific movement. His associations with literary anarchists of the early 1890s, such as Zo d'Axa and Félix Fénéon, faded following his exile to England. During his time abroad, he got involved with the Association Antimilitariste Internationale des Travailleurs only to leave after several disagreements. He moved on to make links with various syndicalist groups which also ended in disagreement and failure. On his return to Paris in 1905, Darien's political loyalties shifted once again. He distanced himself from his old acquaintances, as Victor Méric describes:

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<sup>45</sup> Redfern, p.225. Redfern links Darien's insistence on hard work and a just form of single taxation to his admiration of Calvinism and the Protestant work ethic. Redfern argues that Darien's Georgism is ultimately a combination of egalitarianism and personal effort, of a form of federalism and anarchism, p.215.

<sup>46</sup> 'Après l'ère des attentats, réfugié en Angleterre, il [Darien] prend ses distances avec l'anarchisme, dont il reste pourtant proche : plus qu'un anarchiste, il est un individualiste anarchiste, critiquant dans *le Voleur* l'assagissement du mouvement. Darien ne croit plus guère qu'en la révolte individuelle, seule sincère, et à l'effet immédiat. Pour la société comme pour l'art, Darien exige la liberté, celle du peuple et de l'artiste. L'homme libre veut un art libre.' Valia Gréau, 'Georges Darien, Romancier et militant anarchiste', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* (May – June 1999), p.421.

Il [Darien] disparut de nos milieux. Il s'éloigna de ceux qu'il appelait dédaigneusement des «hongres». On savait, cependant, qu'il habitait Paris et qu'il se trouvait dans une situation très précaire et l'on sut aussi qu'il était devenu radical-socialiste. Il fut même candidat aux élections législatives dans le douzième arrondissement. Hélas! il ne recueillit à peine que quelques dizaines de voix. Sa forte encolure, ses gestes furieux, ses colères subites ne purent séduire les électeurs.<sup>47</sup>

Darien stood as a candidate in both the 1906 legislative elections and the 1912 legislative and municipal elections. As Méric describes, he was not successful. Méric's claim that Darien was known as a radical-socialist during this period appears reasonable. His involvement with the Union syndicale des Artistes dramatiques and the Ligue pour l'impôt unique, combined with his attempts to become a member of parliament, would seem to indicate a distancing from his individualist-anarchism.

However, the fleeting nature of Darien's affiliations with such groups demonstrates that his political character remained that of the determined individualist. Indeed, individualism characterises Darien's works from *Biribi* through to his Georgist pamphleteering. His individualism continuously informed his choices as a political writer and meant he could never settle with one political group. It also drove him to distance himself from the *champ littéraire* and caused him to have difficulties in finding and retaining a publisher. It is problematic, therefore, to describe Darien as *engagé* as, for much of his career, he refused to commit to a particular political cause. Indeed, the label of *dégagé* seems a better fit for such a writer, as he appears to have wilfully disengaged himself from both the political and literary fields. Barrès's purposeful *engagement* stands in stark contrast to this, as his didactic narratives contrast with Darien's tales of isolation and despair. The consequences of Darien's individualism were, ultimately, financial difficulty and professional

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<sup>47</sup> Méric, p.54.

isolation, while Barrès's networking, didacticism and national-socialism brought him commercial success and critical acclaim. It was not until after their deaths that the status of Barrès and Darien in the literary field began to change.

### **Posthumous status**

Time is certainly a leveller. In the present day, Barrès, despite his accolades, prizes and celebrated novels, is hardly better remembered than Georges Darien. There is, perhaps, more scholarly work devoted to Barrès, (although arguably the field in Darien is steadily growing), yet both of these authors seemed to have slipped from the consciousness of the reading public over the decades. When Maurice Barrès died on 7 December 1923 in his hôtel in Neuilly, he was an important member of the cultural establishment. His social standing was such that he had a large funeral, the cortege driving through the streets of Paris with crowds gathering to watch the spectacle. By the time of his death, Barrès was already immortalised as a member of the Académie Française, and through the course of his life garnered respect and popularity. He had published his journals and memoirs. Towards the end of his life he had had biographies devoted to him and critical studies of his work praising him.<sup>48</sup> His home region of Lorraine honoured him by erecting a 'lanterne des morts' on what they called the 'Colline inspirée', in Sion-Vaudémont in his memory.

As Barrès had been respected as a member of the literary establishment, he was also criticised as such. In 1921 Barrès was the subject of a mock trial held by a group of Dadaist writers and artists. Many Dadaists felt that Barrès, who had once been a sort of hero to some of them, had turned against the movement

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<sup>48</sup> For example, Albert Thibaudet, *La Vie de Maurice Barrès*, (Editions de la nouvelle revue française, 1921).

by being fiercely patriotic during World War I and publishing his views in *L'Echo de Paris*, a newspaper which was unpopular in Dadaist circles. Although Barrès himself did not attend this trial, it appears to have had a profound effect on the Parisian Dadaist movement, as a split occurred as a result. One group, led by Breton, took the whole notion seriously while another, headed by Tzara, treated the event with the sort of absurd humour it deserved. The whole event sounds suitably farcical. Tzara even ended his 'testimony' with a song. What such an event shows is that Barrès was, at the end of his life, an important figure in established literary circles, one who was worth criticising. Even in the post-war years of the fifties, Barrès was still being honoured with official markers of respect. For example, 2 November 1952, an effigy of Barrès was erected in the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville in Charmes, his birthplace; a stamp of Barrès was produced on 9 June 1956. Barrès is still recognised as part of the cultural heritage of the Lorraine region. There are many schools and roads named after him, mainly in the Lorraine area. However, Barrès is remembered as a relic of his time, as someone who was once important and respected, rather than a writer whose works still speak to us today.

The reasons for his decline in status are two-fold. Firstly, Barrès's anti-Semitism and his reputation as a proto-fascist means his politics are not palatable to the post-Holocaust reader. Secondly, the density, dryness and piety of much of Barrès's work no longer appeal to readers and the authority he believed his writing possessed has been undermined by modern critical modes of thought, such as Barthes's and Foucault's redressing of the interpretive

authority of the text in favour of the reader.<sup>49</sup> However, despite the difficulties and differences between the modern reader and Barrès, he remains a writer who is worthy of study. This is not because his technique was innovative, or because his political rhetoric is inspirational, but rather because his *engagement* is indicative of the time in which he wrote. He is a political curio of the period. His writing not only tells us about the author, but also the society which he addressed in his work.

While Barrès's marginalisation within the canon has occurred over the last eighty years in reaction to his politics and narrative style, Darien's work has seen occasional reassessments and varying levels of attention from readers and critics. At the end of his life he was an isolated, penniless writer. After living in exile for a number of years, Darien returned to Paris in 1905, and continued to try and get novels published. He also got more involved in theatre, writing plays such as *Non! elle est pas coupable!*, which failed miserably at the Théâtre Molière in 1909. Towards the end of his life Darien distanced himself even further from public life. During World War I he kept a low profile and the death of his wife Suzanne in 1919 crushed him. He wrote to the few people he knew in Paris and appears to have been a lost man. At the end of his life, Darien was questioning the value of his thoughts, viewing himself as an exile in his own land. This exile continued. At this time in his life, Darien was obviously a desperate man and, although he did remarry in 1921, his financial and artistic status saw no improvement before he died in Paris, on 19 August 1921. Auriant describes the sorry state of his funeral in these terms: 'Il n'y guère de monde derrière le corbillard qui le mena à sa dernière demeure. Seul dans la mort,

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<sup>49</sup> Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, trans. by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977); Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?' in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, ed. by Josué V. Harari (London: Methuen, 1979).



comme il avait toujours été dans la vie, cet abandon symbolisait bien sa destinée.<sup>50</sup> Darien was buried in a small cemetery in Bagneux, his headstone bearing the inscription:

Georges Darien  
1862 – 1921  
Homme de lettres  
Auteur de *Biribi*

There was no huge funeral, no stately cortege as there was for Barrès. Darien's death was not announced in the papers until twenty-two days after the event. His death was commented on by a few of the journalists who remembered him, including Severine. She wrote an article about Darien on 16 September, 1921, in the *Journal du Peuple* which demonstrates that although he was not widely known, the few people who did know him were impacted by him: 'Les quatre syllabes de ce nom qui tombent dans l'indifférence publique comme des feuilles détachées de l'arbre, mornes et muettes, sont pour nous quatre coups de tampon sur le gong sonore suffisant à évoquer une période autrement glorieuse, certes, intellectuellement, que celle où nous végétons aujourd'hui...'<sup>51</sup> His publisher, Stock, was someone who recognised Darien's talent, yet knew its potential would not be realised: 'Cet écrivain de talent [...] il méritait mieux que l'indifférence au milieu de laquelle il s'en allé.'<sup>52</sup> Stock also recalled Darien's situation at this time of his death: 'Puis il disparaît. Il était, paraît-il, découragé, lamentable et dans une situation très précaire au moment de sa mort.'<sup>53</sup>

This exile, which Darien felt so acutely, continued to have effect after his death too. During the first half of the twentieth century, Darien seems to have

<sup>50</sup> Auriant, *Darien et l'inhumaine comédie*, p. 251.

<sup>51</sup> Severine, article of 16<sup>th</sup> September 1921, *Journal du Peuple*, as quoted by Auriant in *Darien et l'inhumaine comédie*, p.252.

<sup>52</sup> Stock, *Mémoires d'un éditeur*, p.59.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p.102.

been largely forgotten by critics and readers alike. Auriant, in the preface to *Darien et l'inhumaine comédie* (1966), tells of how difficult it was to find any of Darien's works, even while he was still alive: 'Ce fut Paul Delesalle, en 1916, qui éveilla mon intérêt pour Georges Darien. Ce qu'il me dit de son *Voleur* piqua si fort ma curiosité que je brûlais de lire ce roman. Depuis longtemps épuisé, il était introuvable.'<sup>54</sup> Auriant finally succeeded in procuring a few of Darien's novels about eight years after he began to look for them. Auriant published his first critical book on Darien, simply called *Georges Darien*, in 1955. About this time other critics grew interested. André Breton labelled Darien as he saw best: 'le maudit', identifying him as one of 'les plus rebelles',<sup>55</sup> one who rebelled against his own time, and who was neglected by modern critics until Jean-Jacques Pauvert resurrected *Le Voleur* in his edition of 1955, followed by *Bas les Cœurs* two years later. The mid-1960s also saw cinematic interest in Darien, and Louis Malle went on to produce a film based on *Le Voleur* in 1967. However, the decades that have passed since that period of interest have not brought widespread scholarly recognition for Darien, or indeed entry onto many undergraduate syllabuses. There have been some significant critical works, such as Walter Redfern's *Georges Darien: Robbery and Private Enterprise*, published in 1985, an edition of Darien's major novels in Omnibus's *Voleurs!* of 1994, and Valia Gréau's 2002 publication, *Georges Darien et l'anarchisme littéraire*. These works have not heralded a flood of

<sup>54</sup> Auriant, *Darien et l'inhumaine comédie*, p.15.

<sup>55</sup> André Breton, 'Darien le maudit', preface to *Le Voleur* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1971), p.5.

curious readers ready to re-assess Darien, but are rather rare visits to what one reviewer called 'the Darien gap'.<sup>56</sup>

Ultimately, an investigation of the lives and careers of Darien and Barrès reveals that their status as writers during their lives and the reversal in their fortunes after their deaths are both dependent on the nature of their political commitment. Barrès's skilful manoeuvring of the literary field, his nationalism, collectivism, his didactic moralising and his instructive narrative technique, all resulted in his elevated status as a writer. Darien's individualism informed all aspects of his novels, his journalism and his affiliation with, and subsequent rejection of, various political groups. Those ideological qualities which gave Barrès's and Darien's writing purpose also determined the reception of their works and the position of each writer in the *champ littéraire*. The posthumous reassessment of these two writers is also dependent on the political purpose behind each of their works. Perhaps we, as twenty-first century readers, as more receptive to Darien's fractured, personal narratives which depict isolation and promote the individual, while Barrès's self-serving pseudo-mystic texts are less attractive. The purposes and functions of the works of Darien and Barrès are inextricably linked to their political theories and also to their experiences. An understanding of the political development and the changes in the status of Barrès and Darien are integral to an effective understanding of their works. Furthermore, biographical aspects of their lives are present in their texts in various forms, such as Darien's experiences in Tunisia and Barrès's support of General Boulanger, and need to be acknowledged. Both of these writers transformed episodes of their lives into narratives which promoted aspects of

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<sup>56</sup> Christopher Lloyd, review of Walter Redfern, *Georges Darien: Robbery and Private Enterprise*, *Modern Language Review*, 82, 4 (1987), p.968.

their ideologies. The way in which these episodes were fictionalised will reveal more of the interplay between the political purposes of the texts and the relationship between the voice of the narrator and that of the author. It is to this subject that we now turn.

### Chapter Three

#### Anarchism and Autobiography: *L'Ennemi des lois* and *Biribi*

Notre morale, notre religion, notre sentiment des nationalités, sont choses écroulées, constatais-je, auxquelles nous ne pouvons emprunter de règles de vie, et, en attendant que nos maîtres nous aient refait des certitudes, il convient que nous nous en tenions à la seule réalité, au *moi*. Maurice Barrès, preface to *Sous l'œil des Barbares*, (Œuvre I, p.28).

A discussion of the technique used by Barrès and Darien to portray elements of their own lives in their fiction is an essential part of any consideration of their works. For Darien, his early works in particular, such as *Biribi* and *Bas les cœurs!* contain many of his own experiences as a child and a young man. These experiences are transformed into texts which reveal his vision of his relationship to his readership and the function of his works as testaments to his evolution as an anarchist. For Barrès, his representation of himself in his works was not achieved through fictionalised depictions of his own experiences, but rather through the construction of a strong narrator who voices Barrès's own opinions. An analysis of Barrès's vision of himself will reveal his interpretation of the relationship between author and reader.

The nature of the self was a major theme in many of Barrès's early works and this theme is at the core of his ideological development during this period. The above excerpt from the preface to the first part of Barrès's *Le Culte du moi* trilogy (1888-1891), *Sous l'œil des Barbares*, demonstrates the intensity of Barrès's analysis of the self. This first trilogy he published was presented as an investigation into the creation of the self. Through an examination of the changes wrought in the central character through his isolation from society and immersion in literature and philosophy, Barrès concluded that we are all

products of our families and the cultural heritage of our *pays*, and that we should live in the light of this collectivity. Barrès developed his theory of the self in his next major piece of fiction, *L'Ennemi de lois* (1892), a novel about the imprisonment of an anarchist journalist. An examination of this novel will reveal how Barrès's reaction to anarchism during this period informed his theories of the self and the formative role this had in the construction of his narrative technique. In the early 1890s, Maurice Barrès remained fascinated by certain elements of anarchist culture. In his work *Le Mouvement libertaire sous la Troisième République*, Jean Grave recalls a meeting with Barrès. The editor of *La Révolte* wrote that Barrès 'se piquait d'un certain anarchisme'. He concludes gravely: 'On sait comme il a fini'.<sup>1</sup> The relationship between Barrès and anarchist culture was not an easy one. While certain elements of anarchist thought attracted him, he was repulsed by others.<sup>2</sup> This uneasy connection with anarchist culture is embodied in *L'Ennemi des lois* as Barrès struggled to reconcile his admiration for the energy and activism of anarchist culture with his

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Grave, *Mouvement libertaire sous la Troisième République* (Les Œuvres Représentatives, 1930). In this passage, Grave also vividly describes Barrès's, appearance, air and manners: 'Barrès [...] - n'avait-il pas publié *L'Ennemi des lois* - à son tour voulut m'interviewer. - C'était la série! - De lui aussi j'ai oublié sur quoi roula notre conversation. Tout ce qu'il en reste, c'est que je fus frappé par son profil d'oiseau et qu'il épata les camarades par l'excellence de ses cigares, qu'il jetait après tire deux ou trois bouffées. J'ai également oublié où il publia l'article qu'il tira de notre entrevue. On sait comme il a fini.' (p.82).

<sup>2</sup> The view of Barrès portrayed by some anarchists during this period was also ambivalent. It was not only Jean Grave who was unsure of Barrès. There is a reference to Barrès in a monologue by Aristide Bruant, published on the front page of *Le Mirliton*, on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 1893. The monologue *Les Quat'pattes* was published on the front page of *Le Mirliton* along with a picture of a man in top hat and long coat peering at the posters on a wall advertising Bruant's cabaret. While Sonn concludes that this man is simply a 'bourgeois', *Anarchism and Cultural Politics* p.65, I would argue this figure is actually Barrès himself, with his distinctive hooked nose and large moustache. The opening of the monologue, where Barrès is mentioned is as follows: 'Les quat'pattes, c'est les chiens d'Paris,/ Les voyous, les clebs ed' barrière,/ C'est les ceux qui sont jamais pris.../ Qui va jamais à la fourrière. / Car c'est pas de toutous d'Agnès/ Ni les cabots d'propriétaires;/ C'est mêm'pas des chiens d'locataires;/ I's sont lib's comm' Mossieu Barrès.'

belief in the importance of collective cultural heritage and the power of national identity.

### **Autobiography and Political Activity**

In the two works of fiction this chapter will focus on, both taken from the early careers of Barrès and Darien, both writers presented their readers with versions of their own voices and fictionalised visions of their struggles to develop cohesive political programmes. This investigation, therefore, throws up the question of genre. Can a mixture of fact and fiction be called autobiography in any way? If not, then what type of literature are we dealing with in these two works, and for what purpose did each of these writers include or employ personal experiences in their novels? The problem is one of self-representation, a question which has been grappled with by many writers and thinkers from Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *Les Confessions* (1781-8), to Thomas Carlyle in *Sartor Resartus* (1833-4), to Roland Barthes in *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* (1975), as they sought to represent a version of their genuine selves through the medium of a structured narrative. What we are dealing with in *L'Ennemi des lois* and *Biribi* is not a completely factual rendering of a period of the authors' lives; truth and hard factual evidence were not always adhered to in the creation of these texts. Instead, these narratives are fictions that give structure and drama to opinions and experiences which come directly from the lives of the authors. The term 'autobiography' was defined by Philippe Lejeune as: 'récit rétrospectif en prose qu'une personne réelle fait de sa propre existence, lorsqu'elle met l'accent sur sa vie individuelle, en particulier sur l'histoire de sa

personnalité.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, according to Lejeune, one of the distinguishing features of autobiographical writing is the temporal distance between the events being described and the moment in which they are transformed into text. This sense of retrospection distinguishes the autobiographical text from that of the journal, diary or epistolary prose. The concentration on the inner life of the subject of the text, on the 'vie individuelle', distinguishes this style of writing from historical discourse or the memoirs of an individual of a series of historical events. Lejeune also argues a pact must exist between reader and author, an understanding of the true identity of the narrator and the veracity of his or her account: 'Pour qu'il y ait autobiographie, il faut qu'il y ait identité de l'auteur, du narrateur et du personnage'.<sup>4</sup> Unity must exist between the author and the narrator of an autobiographical text; there must be no distance between the writer and the character who is recounting the events of his or her life if the reader is to believe in the veracity of the account.

Using Lejeune's model of autobiography, a true autobiographical text would, therefore, be written in as a retrospective narrative, telling genuine opinions on personal events and thoughts. Neither *Biribi* nor *L'Ennemi des lois* strictly falls into this category. Darien transformed his experiences of military discipline into a narrative which, although it deeply reflects his own life, is essentially fictional. *L'Ennemi des lois* is not an account of Barrès's own experiences of political imprisonment. He was never arrested for his political activity and, although he was sympathetic to certain elements of the anarchist cause during his early years in Paris, Barrès never stated he was an anarchist. While Darien's narrative technique and characterisation exclude *Biribi* from the

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<sup>3</sup> Philippe Lejeune, *Le Pacte autobiographique* (Seuil, 1975), p.14.

<sup>4</sup> Lejeune. p.15.



category of autobiography, it is an effective model with which to analyse these texts as each of them takes the form of personal reality transformed into a fictionalised narrative. Both *L'Ennemi des lois* and *Biribi* are coloured with varying shades of biographical reality, ranging from a detailed personal account which the author claims is true, to a stylised, heavily structured rendering of the author's investigation into real events.

Maurice Barrès, when he read *Les Désirs de Jean Servien* by Anatole France, had this to say: 'Il y a là une sincérité poignante, je ne sais quel *air autobiographique*, une âpreté que n'est que la réalité, tout un ensemble enfin, qui en feront, si je ne me trompe, *le bréviaire* de plus d'un de nos contemporains' [emphasis is the author's].<sup>5</sup> This comment provides us with a useful term, 'air autobiographique', which is loose enough in its definition to acknowledge that while such texts cannot be fully classified as true autobiography (if, indeed, such a thing exists), they can take on elements of autobiographical writing and give the reader stylised accounts of real experiences. This is the type of literature we are examining here. Each of these novels uses real events and people which, while they remain recognisable and coherent, are manipulated for fictional effect. Each of these novels was also produced early on in the careers of Barrès and Darien as they sought to establish themselves as writers in Paris. How deep is the autobiographical colouring of these novels and what does the manner of the fictional manipulation of real events and people tell us about the identity and status of Maurice Barrès and Georges Darien as young writers?

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<sup>5</sup> Henri Mondor, *Barrès avant le Quartier latin* (Ventadour, 1956), p.136.

*Biribi* was the second novel which Darien managed to get published, but the first full-length work of fiction he had written. *Bas les cœurs!* was published in 1889 and *Biribi* appeared the following year. Only after the publication of Lucien Descaves's *Sous-offs* did Savine give in to the demands of Darien and publish his antimilitarist text. These publication difficulties reflect the views of many publishers that the text was unpalatable to readers and an unwise commercial venture. In contrast with Darien's continual battle with publisher's such as Savine and Stock to produce his fiction, by 1892 Barrès had already published his first major trilogy, *Le Culte du moi*. When the first part of this trilogy, *Sous l'œil des Barbares*, was published in 1888 it received a wide range of reviews ranging from the appreciative and admiring to the reproachful and condemning. Paul Bourget reviewed the novel favourably. He wrote in the *Journal des Débats*: 'Le livre de M. Maurice Barrès, *Sous l'œil des Barbares*, est certainement un des plus remarquables parmi les essais de rajeunissement de cette vieille forme du roman d'analyse.'<sup>6</sup> However, not every reviewer was quite as admiring as Bourget. Even the Lorraine press did not appreciate the work of the local boy. A certain 'A.L.', who claimed to be a friend of Barrès from his youth, wrote in *le Courrier de Meurthe-et-Moselle*: 'L'ouvrage sera peu lu et peu goûté du grand public, parce que l'art y est trop voulu'; he went on to advise Barrès: 'Qu'au lieu d'avoir la vanité d'être précieux pour une élite, Barrès ait la volonté et la généreuse ambition d'être encore compris et aimé des petits et des humbles.'<sup>7</sup> However, as Barrès sought to identify with some readers, others would have easily been put off by these early novels. Containing dense metaphysical arguments and lengthy sections of sermon-like narration, *Le Culte*

<sup>6</sup> Paul Bourget, as quoted by Yves Chiron, *La Vie de Barrès* (Editions Godefroy de Bouillon, 2000), p.84.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

*du moi* trilogy is not the easiest of reads. The reviews of *Sous l'œil des Barbares* reflect this. As Stanislas de Guaïta wrote in a small Lorraine review, *Nancy-Artiste*: '*Sous l'œil des Barbares* est un livre hiératique, hermétique au point d'être fermé aux neuf dixièmes des lecteurs.'<sup>8</sup> In this review de Guaïta, a friend of Barrès from their youth who had moved to Paris at about the same time, compliments Barrès for that which 'A.L.' of *le Courrier de Meurthe-et-Moselle* had berated him: for being too 'précieux'. Barrès was aware of the elitist, divisive aspect of his writing at this time. When he sent his manuscript to be read by Georges Montorgueil, who wrote for the literary review *L'Eclair*, Barrès wrote in the accompanying letter: 'Mon livre [...] ne satisfait pas tout le monde; il est mécontent, âpre et orgueilleux.'<sup>9</sup> Darien's difficulties in getting his political fiction published at this time reflect his lowly status within the literary field and the extremity of his political views. Barrès, however, was aware that his writing was not palatable to the majority of readers, but he was unconcerned by this; the 'précieux', elitist nature of these novels is not simply a consequence of Barrès's chosen style, but is rather a result of the ideology of the self which he expounds in these texts and reflects his ambition to become a consecrated writer of esteem.

A connection between Barrès's early writings and his later more overtly political works has been made by modern critics such as Jonathan Fishbane, Suzanne Guerlac and Zeev Sternhell,<sup>10</sup> and such research has lead to a

<sup>8</sup> Stanislas de Guaïta, as quoted by Chiron, p.83.

<sup>9</sup> Maurice Barrès, letter to Georges Montorgueil, dated 22 February 1888, as quoted by Chiron, p.83.

<sup>10</sup> Jonathan Fishbane, 'From Decadence to Nationalism in the Early Writings of Maurice Barrès', *Nineteenth Century French Studies*, 4, 13, Summer (1985), pp.266-278; Suzanne Guerlac, 'Maurice Barrès et la poétique d'identité', *Revue des sciences humaines*, 257 (January 2000), pp.49-65; Zeev Sternhell, *Maurice Barrès et le nationalisme français* (Armand Colin, 1972).



reassessment of the significance of these texts in relation to the rest of Barrès's œuvre.<sup>11</sup> It is possible to trace the roots of his later more explicitly political works, such as *Les Déracinés* (1897) or *Leurs figures* (1902) in the first few novels Barrès wrote, his *Culte du moi* trilogy. If opinions of these early texts have been revised as links between them and Barrès's later political writing have been found, then surely it is time to reassess the significance of *L'Ennemi des lois* also. This text was published at a time when Barrès was developing his nationalist theories while also maintaining links with radical socialist and anarchist activists. *L'Ennemi des lois* was written during a period in Barrès's career when he had found his feet as an author after the first success of *Le Culte du moi* and he was turning his attention to more overtly political matters. It is a text which can shed light on the development of his political thought and also on this changing status within the *champ littéraire*.

The period between 1890 and 1894 saw many developments in the activity and ferocity of the anarchist movement, and both Barrès and Darien were involved in these developments. While Darien's intimate style of first-person narration combined with his powerful sense of injustice to reflect his belief in the cause of the individual oppressed by organised politics and religion, Barrès's omniscient narrator directs the reader, using didactic argument to present his case. Both *Biribi* and *L'Ennemi des lois* were published during the period when the series of anarchist *attentats* on political figures and events was gathering

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<sup>11</sup> According to Guerlac, the work of Barrès has been interpreted by modern readers and critics as indicative of what was wrong with the literary world of his time and used as a medium through which to criticise or promote various strands of today's literary interpretation: 'Un auteur tel que Barrès (véritablement exclu de domaine littéraire d'aujourd'hui) agit comme un corps étranger à travers lequel on pourrait réfracter une variété de tendances diverses dans le monde de la critique littéraire actuelle' Guerlac, p.64.

steam. This was the era of Ravachol, Vaillat and Henry.<sup>12</sup> Barrès's text attempts to address the issue of the relationship between the anarchist press and the violence of anarchist activists, as his main character André Maltère, a journalist, is imprisoned for his anarchist activity. Darien's work is less directly concerned with such political activity (Froissard is imprisoned for insubordination rather than any participation in a radical political cause) and more focused on the creation of an anarchist. While it is undeniable that *Biribi* is full of much of Darien's anti-militarist politics, the text is not an exegesis of his political views but rather an account of experiences which led to the formation of such views. There are, therefore, two levels to the examination of these texts in this chapter: first, what do these texts reveal about the status and identity of Barrès and Darien early in their career; and secondly, what were their opinions about anarchism at this time, and how is this revealed in the texts?

### **Prefaces and Politics**

The differences in their purposes and methods as writers are very evident in the prefatory remarks both writers included in their works. A comparison of these paratextual introductory sections of the novels allows us to hear the voices of the authors as they presented their methods and reasoned out their literary programmes for these works. *Biribi* is a novel which, at times, blurs the line between memoir and literature. It was written at a point in Darien's life when he was just beginning to find his style and identity as an author. In its broadest terms, it is an account of the journey of Jean Froissard, a young army recruit

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<sup>12</sup> In 1892, Ravachol (François Koenigstein, 1859-1893) began a series of attacks on judges and attorneys. He had escaped from police custody after being arrested for murder, grave-robbing and other offences. His acts of political violence made him famous and the anarchist press reacted with numerous articles discussing him.

who is put into a disciplinary camp in northern Africa. Froissard is the Darien figure in the novel. It is, Darien claimed, a true reflection of his time in the camp, as he explains in his preface to the novel. The preface to *Biribi*, which appeared with the first edition, is essential to the reader's understanding of Darien's purposes for the novel and the amount of his own experiences and personality he invested in the text. He began his preface as follows:

Ce livre est un livre vrai. *Biribi* a été vécu. Il n'a point été composé avec des lambeaux de souvenirs, des haillons de documents, les loques pailletées des récits suspects. Ce n'est pas un habit d'Arlequin, c'est une casaque de forçat – sans doublure. Mon héros l'a endossée, cette casaque, et elle s'est collée à sa peau. Elle est devenue sa peau même (Voleurs, p.9).

Darien emphasised the organic nature of his text. He presented his work as a piece of himself, a story which was more than a story because it had been lived. There is a powerful contrast between how Darien pictured his own writing and his view of the writing of others. While other works appear as piles of rag-like documents and memories stitched together to form the costume of a pantomiming Harlequin (a dig, perhaps, at the methods of naturalist writers), Darien's text is presented as a living skin which forms around the body of his hero. While other stories can only pretend to give true accounts, *Biribi* is, according to Darien, a true embodiment of his own experiences.

Darien's scorn for other styles of fiction writing becomes more explicit as the preface goes on:

J'aurais pu, aussi, parler d'un tas de choses dont je n'ai point parlé, ne pas dédaigner la partie descriptive, tirer sur le caoutchouc des sensations possibles, et ne point laisser de côté, comme je l'ai fait, - volontairement, - des sentiments nécessaires: la pitié, par exemple. J'aurais pu, surtout, m'en tenir aux généralités, rester dans le vague, faire pattes de velours, - en laissant voir, adroitement, que je suis seul et unique en mon genre pour les pattes de velours, - et me montrer enfin très digne, très auguste, très solennel, - presque nuptial, - très haut sur faux-col. Aux personnes qui me donnaient ces conseils, j'avais tout d'abord envie de répondre, en employant, pour parler leur langue, des expressions qui me répugnent, que j'avais voulu faire de la psychologie, l'analyse d'un état d'âme, la dissection d'une conscience, le découpage d'un caractère. Mais, comme elles m'auraient riz au nez, je leur ai répondu, tout simplement, que j'avais voulu faire de *la Vie*. Et elles ont ri derrière mon dos (pp.9-10) [*italics author's own*].

The first half of this passage presents the reader with two aspects of fiction writing which Darien rejected: playing with the emotions of the reader, and lack of detail replaced with generalities. He did not want his narrator to show pity, or any other emotion, which was not genuine or real. He did not want his writing to be reduced to an over-sentimentalised story which was vague in its execution and false in its purposes. Darien used the image of 'pattes de velours' to convey his abhorrence of the author who seeks to charm his or her readers. He did not wish to pander to his potential readership and appear dignified and respected, 'très haut sur faux-col'. Again, we have a clothing image used to convey hypocrisy and pretence. In the second half of this passage, Darien depicted the type of fiction he was aiming to write. Firstly, he described it in the Bergsonian terms of writers such as Bourget or Barrès, as psychology, an analysis of a state of mind and spirit, a dissection of a personality. This is followed with two sentences which reveal the bitterness Darien felt towards publishers and other writers who had rejected or criticised his work. When they laughed at him, he declared he wanted to 'faire de *la Vie*', but they laughed behind his back all the same. Here we see the conflict between styles of writing as Darien perceived it: he believed he was creating a sincere piece of writing which went beyond fiction as it portrayed life itself, and which could not be defined by the fashionable literary models of the day and which was met with derision and scorn.

The sincere tone of the text is elaborated by Darien in the preface as he sought to justify and clarify his narrative technique. While Darien sought to present Froissard, the narrator of the novel, as a version of himself, there is also some distance between the narrative voice and that of the author. While the text is written in the first person, the preface makes it clear that the author viewed

Froissard as a fictional creation. However, there is evidently tension between the fictional elements of this creation and the necessity Darien felt to represent his own experiences in a truthful and realistic way:

[c]et homme passe trois ans aux Compagnies de Disciplines; et comment il a usé ces trois années, j'ai essayé de le montrer. J'ai voulu qu'il vécût comme il a vécu, qu'il pensât comme il a pensé, qu'il parlât comme il a parlé. Je l'ai laissé libre, même, de pousser ces cris affreux qui crèvent le silence des bagnes et qui n'avaient point trouvé d'écho, jusqu'ici. J'ai voulu qu'il fût lui, - un paria, un désolé, un malheureux qui, pendant trois ans, renfermé, aigri, replié, n'a regardé qu'en lui-même, n'a pas lu une ligne, n'a respiré que l'air de son cachot, - un cachot ouvert, le pire de tous. J'ai voulu, surtout, qu'il fût ce douloureux, fort et jeune, qui pendant longtemps ne peut pas aimer et qui finit par haïr. J'ai voulu qu'il souffrit, par devant témoins, ce qu'il a souffert isolé (p.10).

To express this tension between the fictional narrator and the real self of the author, Darien used terms such as: 'j'ai essayé de le montrer'; '[j]e l'ai laissé libre'; '[j]'ai voulu qu'il souffrit, par devant témoins, ce qu'il a souffert isolé'. The difficulties inherent in the process of transforming real people and events into fiction are tackled head on from the outset by Darien. In this preface he declared his intentions for *Biribi*, and defined and problematised his method of writing. His intentions were to portray Froissard's experiences as real because there was so much of Darien's own experiences and personality invested in the text.

Even though Descaves's *Sous-Offs* made *Biribi*'s route to publication easier, it also caused Darien to be bitter and resentful of Descaves's success.<sup>13</sup> Before Descaves published *Sous-Offs*, there had been other novels with a similar military subject, such as Abel Hermant's *Le Cavalier Miserey* (1887) and Henri Fèvre's *Au port d'armes, mœurs militaires* (1887). Could it that Darien was simply plugging into this line of fiction writing, jumping on the military novel bandwagon? There are also similarities in subject and style to the work of Jules

<sup>13</sup>As Walter Redfern puts it: 'Darien lived an exile that was a state of mind, the product of his own choice in joining the army combined with bad luck and poor timing (the previous publication of Descaves' *Sous-Offs*)', *Georges Darien: Robbery and Private Enterprise*, p.61.



Vallès, such as the use of humour as the narrator sees the ridiculous in figures of authority, the use of the present tense and the child narrator. Again, was Darien attempting to fit into some radical style of novel writing in order to gain credit with the bohemian critics and writers of Montmartre?

It is undeniable that there is common ground between *Biribi* and the work of other writers like Descaves and Vallès. However, I think Darien makes it clear that he is not attempting to fit in with any prescribed method of novel writing, or indeed to conform to any trend, but instead to express his experiences in the clearest way possible. Thus he claimed the novel was:

tout entier dans l'étude de l'homme, il n'est point l'étude des milieux. Je constate les effets, je ne recherche pas les causes. *Biribi* n'est pas un roman à thèse, c'est l'étude sincère d'un morceau de vie, d'un lambeau saignant d'existence. Ce n'est pas non plus – et ce serait commettre une grossière erreur que de le croire – un roman militaire (p.10).<sup>14</sup>

In this passage, Darien does not define his work, but tells the reader what it is not. Perhaps this elusiveness is the key to Darien's account of his own experiences. Froissard, and by extension Darien, comes away from the experiences of *Biribi* not knowing who he is, but rather knowing what, or who, he is not. He is not a soldier, he is not a patriot, and he is no longer a prisoner. He is a man who is questioning his identity, searching for direction. This elusive identity was very much a part of Darien.<sup>15</sup> Again we see the depth of the effect of anarchism on the writing of Darien. His refusal to be labelled in any way and his rejection of many literary models are indicative of his rejection of all authorities which would attempt to govern the individual. Coupled with this

<sup>14</sup> The coded style of this passage echos Zola's naturalist rhetoric, referring to the 'l'étude sincère d'un morceau de vie, d'un lambeau saignant d'existence'. While Darien's terminology resonates with that of Zola in his pursuit of the true reflection of life through fiction, their methods in executing this aim were very different as were the ideologies behind the production of their fiction.

<sup>15</sup> As Walter Redfern agrees: 'Darien's individual brand of anarchism, his obsession with antimilitarism, exile, robbery, patriotic condemnation of the homeland, private enterprise, Georgism, and the rhetoric of protest: all of these do not fall neatly into a harmonious pattern. He is still too insistently alive to be congealed into a final categorisation', p.240.

view of literature as a form of self-expression for the individual, is Darien's need to have 'témoins' for experiences, as expressed through those of Froissard. Therefore, Darien's work functions as a representation of the conflict of the individual to remain autonomous and free from restraints while also forming connections with other individuals who can empathise with this struggle.

While *Biribi* was defined by Darien as an account of real-life events told in a personal way, *L'Ennemi des lois* is presented as a text which aims to portray the effects of contemporary political theory on its characters. Barrès's *avertissement* to the novel defines the text in almost experimental terms:

Nulle de ces pages qui prétende fournir des notions sur les réformateurs de ce siècle: je ne fus curieux que de noter les points où leurs théories s'accordent avec la sensibilité des gens de cette heure. Un jeune homme qui se plaît à voir clair et à raisonner, une jeune fille élevée selon les méthodes récentes, une jeune femme que n'embarrasse aucun des vieux scrupules sociaux et chez qui le goût tient lieu de moralité, ne voilà-t-il pas des contemporains et sur qui c'est intéressant d'essayer la prise de nos réformateurs, de Saint-Simon à Kropotkine? (*Ennemi*, p.ii).

The relationship between the author and his characters is clearly intended to be more distant than that of Darien and Froissard. Barrès appears to be presenting his novel as a type of observation of political theories in practice. Barrès's purposes for this novel, as described in this *avertissement*, were not to relate personal experiences to the reader, but rather to examine the effects of anarchist political doctrine on the lives of his characters. Therefore, in comparison with Darien's narrative methods, the perspective of Barrès's narrator is much more removed from the characters, manipulating them to form an argument to support his own political theories. While Darien wished his character-narrator to dominate and form the text around himself, Barrès aimed to have a firm authorial hand on the narrative and the characters, directing and moulding them around his political purposes. How does this difference between the narrative methods of Darien and Barrès work out in the text?

### The Voice of the Narrator

The opening scenes of *Biribi* and *L'Ennemi des lois* both deliver the reader directly to the hearts of the narratives, to the characters who are the main focus of each novel: Jean Froissard and André Maltère. Both of these characters are also presented to the readers in their own words, Froissard by means of the first-person narration and Maltère in the text of an article he has written. The opening paragraphs of Barrès's text introduce the reader to the tone of much of Maltère's dialogue and writing. The first glimpse the reader has of the young anarchist journalist is through his article criticising the quality of the army officers produced by Saint-Cyr.

Une bombe ayant été lancée sur le cercle des officiers, où elle produisit d'ailleurs peu de dégâts, on poursuivit, à défaut des coupables, un journal qui, dans ce même temps, prétendait que les jeunes gens issus de Saint-Cyr n'ont aucune qualité pour commander. «Nous ne saisissons pas de rapport, disait cet article, entre des examens de géographie ou de mathématiques et le pouvoir d'un chef. L'autorité se vérifie où s'acquiert dans des conditions qui ne ressortissent pas du programme de nos écoles spéciales militaires. Comment des examinateurs décideraient-ils si un jeune homme a le don de commander? Pierre, fort imposant pour Jules, se trouble et s'incline devant Paul. L'autorité, c'est moins la qualité d'un homme qu'une relation entre deux êtres. Ne peuvent la reconnaître utilement que ceux qui la subiront.» L'ensemble de l'article, où la critique des militaires n'apparaissait ainsi qu'à titre d'exemple, affirmait l'à-propos d'une émancipation de l'individu, et prévoyait une sévère révision des divers articles du Contrat social (Ennemi, pp.1-2).

The tone of this opening is set from the very first sentence: a bomb has been thrown at the officers' club, but it has not caused much damage. The violent actions of the political activists, whom the reader presumes are anarchists, are dismissed in that one clause inserted into the first sentence. While the terrorist activities are relegated to a nuisance, an article commenting on the lack of leadership qualities in young army officers is presented as a more culpable project. The effectiveness of this article is also undercut by Barrès in a similar way in which he undermined the bombing incident. While the reader is given a

passage of the article which criticises the authority of army officers, Barrès undermines this argument by commenting that this was not the main thrust of the article and the rest of Maltère's argument is reduced to two vague phrases: 'L'ensemble de l'article [...] affirmait l'à-propos d'une émancipation de l'individu, et prévoyait une severe revision des divers articles du Contrat social.' Any power which could have been evident in Maltère's argument is therefore weakened by Barrès from the outset of the novel. Maltère is being established in these opening scenes of the novel as a voice from which the narrator is distancing himself, rather than one he is fully supporting.

In comparison with the introduction of André Maltère, the opening scenes of *Biribi* take the reader directly into the mind and motivations of Jean Froissard. We meet him as he is walking with his father through the streets of Paris after joining the army. *Biribi*'s structure is fairly simple: the reader follows Froissard as he joins up in Paris, is sentenced to time in the disciplinary camp due to insubordination, and then sent to North Africa where he travels to the camp itself. After almost three years, and the end of his sentence, he returns to Paris, a bitter man, feeling more isolated and more jaded than he did before he left, just as Darien did. There is symmetrical structure to Froissard's journey. The first and last chapters of the novel take place in Paris, with the expanse of his African experience in between. The novel's simple structure is compounded by the powerful simplicity of the narrative itself, all written in the present tense, in an intimate, almost confessional style. While the tight structure of the novel enabled Darien to keep hold of the narrative arc of the novel, the inventive, intimate style of the narration draws the reader into a powerful encounter with Froissard as we share in his experiences. As the young Froissard walks with his

father, the reader has access to the doubts and difficult emotions which the character-narrator is experiencing in that moment:

La chose que je viens de faire, je le sais, était une chose forcée; mais je sens que c'est aussi une chose bête, triste, et, qui est plus, irréparable. Et nous marchons côte à côte, sans plus rien dire, traversant sur le pont désert des Invalides la Seine jaunâtre ride par le vent froid, moi, le fils qui ai voulu mettre un terme à une situation douloureuse, et lui, le père désolé d'avoir été de me laisser faire. Nous semblons deux étrangers. Et je me tais, aussi, parce que je sens que, si je recommençais à parler, je n'aurais plus dans la bouche les paroles bêtes et endormantes de tout à l'heure et que je ne pourrais plus trouver que des phrases amères et des mots méchants (Voleurs, p.13).

Darien's narration contrasts significantly in style with that of Barrès's early works. Darien's first person narration closes the distance between narrator and reader by letting the reader look easily into the mind of the character; Froissard's reasoning and motivation are not a mystery. Darien is explicit and unpretentious about the workings of the mind of his main character. His style is as blunt and unswervingly direct as Barrès's is lofty and diffuse. The inner lives of the main characters of both Darien's and Barrès's novels are both stylised and fictionalised, but whereas Barrès's André Maltère strays into philosophical and political monologues, Jean Froissard's thoughts often centre on self-doubt and despair at his circumstances. In the above passage, the reader is presented with the unspoken words and self-doubt of the young Froissard, 'je me tais [...] je ne pourrais plus trouver que des phrases amères', and the distance and isolation felt between the father and son, '[n]ous semblons deux étrangers'. All the isolation and separation which are present in the relationship between the characters is also invoked by Darien in the gloomy picture the narrator paints of their surroundings: 'le pont désert des Invalides la Seine jaunâtre ride par le vent froid'.

Barrès filters the voice of his anarchist writer, Maltère, through that of the narrator who begins by leading the reader to doubt in the power and validity of the journalist's arguments. Darien, however, attempts to present the reader

with an unfiltered voice which is sincere and honest in its opinions, emotions and experiences. This unswerving focus on the inner life of the narrator-character of the novel flattens the distance between the reader and the author, creating a much more direct and powerful emotional link through the text compared with Barrès's methods.

The consequences of Darien's choice to create such a direct path between the emotions of the narrator and the reader are also evident in the structure of the narrative. Whereas the forward motion of the plot of Barrès's text is dependent on stylised analysis and rhetoric, as the reader follows Maltère and the narrator through chapters of discussion based on political and philosophical arguments, Darien's narration is much more dependent on Froissard's reactions to others and the situations in which he finds himself. For example, the headings of each section of Barrès's text demonstrate the analytical structure which he attempted to construct. The headings for the second chapter alone are as follows: 'A Saint-Pélagie ou sensibilité des réformateurs français', 'Saint-Simon', 'Fourier' and 'Education de la petite princesse'. Through the introduction of a young girl in the second chapter, Claire Pichon-Picard who wants to learn from Maltère, the structure of the novel is established:

Au lieu de présenter à Claire ses idées dans leur complet développement, et telles qu'il les possédait à cette heure, André préféra embrasser leur développement avec elle et lui raconter l'histoire de leur formation. Méthode plus lente, semble-t-il, que s'ils se fussent bornés à constater l'état présent de sa conscience, mais il évitait par là les objections qu'elle n'eût pas manqué d'élever et qui eussent à tous instants nécessité des retours en arrière et mille préliminaires qu'il valait mieux dès lors prévoir et disposer avec ordre. [...] De leurs nombreux entretiens, nous n'avons retenu que ce qui se transforme chez eux en sensibilité; nous n'avons aucun souci de la mesure dans laquelle ils s'instruisirent, et ne sommes curieux que de les voir qui s'émeuvent. Seule cette préoccupation donne sens aux pédanteries que nous allons côtoyer. Si ces pages sentent le manuel, il faut pourtant les accepter comme le milieu où se forme le cœur de ces héros: paysage médiocre, mais dont l'atmosphère vivifie le sens moral (Ennemi, pp.42-4).

Therefore, the education of Claire will determine the structure and motivation of large sections of Barrès's novel. However, it is important to note the way in which the author distanced himself from this process. Towards the end of the passage above, the narrator makes it clear that, while this method may be unpleasant for both him and the reader, it is a necessary undertaking. Again, Barrès's narrator creates a firm sense of distance between himself and the opinions and methods of André Maltère, so much so that any failings the narrative might have could be attributed to the character rather than the narrator.

This contrast in the motivation of the plot structure of each of these novels is demonstrated through examining the reaction of each of the main characters to their imprisonment. In the second chapter of *L'Ennemi des lois* the reader is witness to André Maltère's reaction to his imprisonment:

André Maltère, installé à Saint-Pélagie se dit: «Tout de même j'aime mieux la prison politique que la torture; c'est un martyr réduit à l'abstrait et le signe d'une punition plutôt qu'une punition; c'est une simple formule, et, comme je n'ai pas de famille pour la trouver déshonorante, me voici, ma foi, fort à l'aise.» Mlle Pichon-Picard avait décidé de le visiter dans sa prison. Elle vint accompagnée d'une femme de chambre, tira du large manteau, où s'enveloppait son corps léger d'enfant qui n'a pas fini sa croissance, une sorte de questionnaire vingt fois raturé, puis, mouillant son crayon, sans nuance visible de coquetterie, sans aucun sentiment de femme à homme, avec cette conviction, cette soif de s'instruire particulière aux jeunes filles de ce temps qui ont, toutes, la passion des professeurs, elle l'interrogeait sur la possibilité de concevoir une société qui s'accorde avec notre sensibilité moderne (Ennemi, pp.39-40).

Clearly, this is not an intimate account of everyday life in prison. Instead of the details of events and experiences which Darien used to convey the harshness and brutality of the situation in which Froissard found himself, Barrès chose to focus on the philosophical questions which he observed in such a situation. Maltère appears at ease with his predicament, comparing it to the 'sign of a punishment' rather than the genuine article. This is punishment reduced to an abstraction, and the thoughts of Maltère in reaction to his imprisonment are also reduced to a tightly constructed linguistic metaphor. This is character also

reduced to an abstraction; a portrait of an embodiment of a set of political and philosophical ideas rather than a character which is truly *vraisemblable*. The methods which Barrès used in *L'Ennemi des lois* are those which Suleiman refers to in the context of *Les Déracinés*. She argues that *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale* is an example of a *roman à thèse*, as the narration of these texts provides the reader with a 'negative exemplary apprenticeship';<sup>16</sup> the reader is shown how not to act through the bad examples of some of the characters. While positive or negative aspects of the apprenticeship are not as clear-cut in *L'Ennemi des lois* as in *Les Déracinés*, the structure of the narration as a learning process (both for the characters and the reader) is established by Barrès in his early texts. This relates not only to his political purposes for this novel (an investigation and critique of anarchist ideology and activity), but also to his view of his own growing status within the literary field. Barrès's didactic mode of writing establishes his voice as the omniscient authority in the text. Not only does this voice have power over the characters of the novel, but it is also the educator of the reader. Just as the validity of André Maltère's arguments and status is questioned by the narrator from the beginning of the text, the authority and status of Maurice Barrès is never in doubt.

Darien, however, uses contrasting methods to construct his narrator-character and, consequently, the narration itself. The simple symmetrical structure of Froissard's journey, dependent on his involvement with the army, is combined in the novel with his continuing sense of isolation, which becomes more and more pronounced over the course of his travels and his time in the camp. This emotional distance between characters is first established, as we

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<sup>16</sup> Suleiman, pp.85-95.



have seen, through the relationship between Froissard and his father. This distance is also evident in the difficulties the young recruit experiences in relation to other members of his family. Darien draws out the ridiculousness of this family, who appear to criticise Froissard at every opportunity. The following conversation demonstrates the way in which Darien used a combination of humour and pathos to alienate the reader from the characters of the uncle, aunt and cousin, while creating sympathy for Froissard. His uncle is giving his approval to Froissard's decision to join the army:

- [...] Tu verras, quand tu seras soldat, si tu interrompras impunément tes chefs! Ah! tu en as besoin, vois-tu de manger de la vache enragée!
- Ma tante, qui vient d'entrer avec ma cousine, a surpris ces dernières paroles. Elle s'approche de moi.
- Tu t'es engagé? Tu vas être soldat? Eh bien! entre nous, mon ami, ça ne te fera pas de mal de manger de la vache enragée.
- Ça lui fera même beaucoup de bien, appuie ma cousine, avec un petit air convaincu. J'esquisse un geste de dénégation, mais mon oncle me jette un regard furieux. Cette fois, c'est bien entendu, j'ai besoin de manger de la vache enragée. Je n'ai plus qu'à me figurer que c'est un traitement à suivre, voilà tout. D'ailleurs, ça doit me faire beaucoup de bien.
- Tu as toujours eu un caractère exécrable, continue mon oncle. Dès l'âge le plus tendre, tu faisais tourner le lait de ta nourrice...
- C'est une horreur, dit ma tante.
- Une abomination! dit ma cousine.
- Mais sa mère lui lance un coup d'œil de travers. Une jeune fille ne doit pas faire semblant de savoir que les nourrices ont du lait. C'est très inconvenant (Voleurs.p.16).

The humour in this passage is drawn from two sources: the clichéd language used by Froissard's relatives and the false gentility of their manners. Through the narrator's repetition of key phrases of the dialogue, the reader joins him in his ridicule of his relatives: 'j'ai besoin de manger de la vache enragée [...] ça doit me faire beaucoup de bien.' These are not the thoughts of Froissard's uncle we are hearing, but rather Froissard's own interpretation of his uncle's thoughts. Again, the reader's perspective is constantly filtered through that of the narrator-character. Further on in the above passage, we have Froissard's interpretation of his aunt's thoughts as she looks at her daughter: '[u]ne jeune fille ne doit pas faire semblant de savoir que les nourrices ont du lait. C'est très inconvenant.'

Through the perspective of the narrator the family's pretence of politeness is rendered risible. The reader is forced to regard the rest of the Froissard family through the gaze of the nephew who finds them ridiculous. Therefore, the glimpses into the minds of the aunt and the uncle in this scene are not examples of a shift in narrative perspective, but are indicative of Darien's increasing isolation of his narrator from those around him. Through the use of humour in scenes such as this Darien gives the reader further insight into the isolation experienced by Froissard.

This isolation, created by difficulties in family relationships and established from the outset of *Biribi*, was clearly inspired by Darien's own experiences as a young man. One source of the friction is the nephew's wish to be a writer, and the strength of the political views that he expresses in his poetry. His cousin also pointedly mentions Froissard's Protestant origins, suggesting his immediate family do not 'fit in' with his other relations. All of these instances are echoes of the young Darien's difficulties at home: the Adriens too were a Protestant family, Darien too had difficulties with his parents, he too joined the army under pressure from his family, he too was criticised for his radical politics and artistic aspirations. Even though *Biribi* is a piece of fiction which follows a dramatic narrative line, which presents the reader with stylised scenes of conflict between characters, it is essential to remember that the origins of Froissard's isolation are always rooted in the reality of Darien's own difficult experiences. It is this rooting in reality which contributes to the pathos that the author is able to create.

### Pathos and Humour

Darien therefore demonstrates the alienation he experienced through the character of Froissard by creating scenes of both genuine emotion and powerful satire. The almost farcical exchanges between Froissard and his family are typical of the instances of satire within the novel, which are often tempered with a sense of sadness that increases as Froissard's situation worsens. As the brutality of the camp increases, so does the bitterness of the irony which Darien employs to render the situation somehow ridiculous to the reader; the violence of the guards becomes strange through the humanising effect of Froissard's ability to distinguish the ironic. The peak of this effect arrives through the death of a soldier called Palet. He is punished for not standing to march when he is ordered to, even though he is too ill to stand. The punishment for this is so brutal that he dies, and the scene of his funeral is filled with contrast between the hypocrisy of the officers who conduct the ceremony and Froissard's own thoughts on the matter which reveal the real horror. Before the cracked coffin is lowered into the ground, a soldier reads out a pre-prepared speech:

Cher camarade, c'est avec un bien vif regret que nous te conduisons aujourd'hui au champ de repos. Moissonné à la fleur de l'âge, comme une plante à peine éclos, tu as eu au moins, pour consoler tes derniers moments le secours des sentiments religieux que garde dans son cœur tout Français digne de ce nom. Tombé au champ d'honneur, sur cette terre de Tunisie que tu as contribué à donner à ta patrie, ta place est marquée dans le Panthéon de tous ces héros inconnus qui n'ont point de monument. Ton pays, ta famille doivent être fiers de toi [...] en apprenant que tu as succombé en tenant haut et ferme le drapeau de la France, ce drapeau qui... religion – patrie – honneur – drapeau – famille... (Voleurs.p.92).

Just as in the scene between Froissard and his family, the language Darien uses in this section to convey the pointlessness of Palet's death is that of cliché. This time it is the empty language of honour that Darien is attacking through the use of clumsy metaphor ('comme une plante à peine éclos') and images of military heroism which jar so heavily with the true circumstances of Palet's demise. This

language is ultimately inadequate, and the soldier's speech fades into pure nationalist and military clichés: 'religion – patrie – honneur – drapeau – famille...' Froissard's inner, honest observations are juxtaposed with the hypocrisy of the speeches in order to create a powerful contrast and heavy, bitter irony.

Toi qui est mort en appelant ta mère, toi qui, dans ton délire, avais en ton œil terne la vision de ta chaumière, tu vas dormir là, rongé, à vingt-trois ans, par les vers de cette terre sur laquelle tu as pâti, sur laquelle tu es mort, seul, abandonné de tous, sans personne pour calmer tes ultimes angoissés, sans d'autre main pour te fermer les yeux que la main brutale d'un infirmier qui t'engueulait, la nuit, quand tes cris désespérés venaient troubler son sommeil (Voleurs.p.92).

The effect of this powerful combination of irony and sorrow makes the reader painfully aware of Froissard's attempts to remain human whilst those around him appear to have lost their sense of compassion. Even this scene, however, is not left in the darkness of complete despair, as Darien injects a little more bitter humour at the close of the chapter, making the reader aware that it is impossible for Froissard to openly defy the officers in the face of such brutality and hypocrisy. After his long internal monologue in which he mourns for Palet, condemns the officers and the entire army, he later meets the officer who made the speech telling others about it:

Les applaudissements pleuvent.  
 - Ah! très chic! très chic! très bien!  
 - Mais c'est au cimetière qu'il fallait l'entendre. Ça vous faisait un effet...  
 Un des assistants m'aperçoit; il m'interpelle.  
 - N'est pas, Froissard, c'était bien?  
 - Merde! (Voleurs.p.93).

It is this sustained pathetic tone which increases the reader's sympathy for Froissard; he, the prisoner and criminal, appears to be the rational human being in this situation, not the officers or the guards.

The absurdity which is inherent in Froissard's circumstances (the prisoner is humane, his captors are brutes) is also evident in the manner in which

Darien presents the geography of Froissard's environment. Even though *Biribi* is set in a foreign land, it is interesting to note that it does not focus on the strangeness of North Africa. Darien was not attempting to write some sort of travel fiction as that of explorer-journalists of the time such as Maupassant, who travelled widely throughout Morocco and Tunisia in the 1880's sending regular reports back to *Le Gaulois*, spreading scenes of exotic towns and desert landscapes before the eyes of his readers. Darien's exotica is not the foreign foods or people, but rather the strangeness of the Frenchmen with whom Froissard is imprisoned and the strange depths within himself which he discovers during his time in the camp.

The narrative centres on the state of mind of the narrator and the depraved and brutal nature of those around him. A motif which recurs throughout *Biribi* is the portrayal of the soldiers, whether officers or prisoners, as animals. Froissard relates to the reader how he sees his fellow soldiers in startling terms: 'O bétail aveugle et sans pensée, chair à canon et viande à cravache' (p.29). The camp itself is portrayed as almost a foreign land: the men are all dressed in strange uniforms, they take on bizarre nicknames, their routine is altered from that which they had experienced before, the language of command is often reduced to crisp Latin phrases. All this slowly becomes a familiar mystery to Froissard, as he attempts to reconcile the ridiculous ceremony and pseudo-honour of the army with the savageness he encounters.

The brutalising effect of imprisonment also becomes very evident in Froissard himself. His basest instincts come to the fore as he longs firstly for food and drink in the hot and dusty conditions, and then he dwells on his sexual desire. This desire is not focused on a particular woman, but rather the basic

need for human contact and satisfaction. He tells the reader that he needs 'le vide sans forme, sans nom, la chose quelconque, mais vivante, intelligente, humaine, consolante.' (p.148) Froissard sometimes expresses a wish for death, to be anywhere but where he finds himself. This longing for oblivion is, of course, a reaction to the terrible and terrifying conditions in which the prisoners live. Froissard longs to be anywhere outside of himself, to escape his conditions and all the horror he sees through obliterating conscious thought, to obtain a certain degree of satisfaction through food, sex or death. It is only through the continual revelation of Froissard's private thoughts that Darien is able to convey his struggle to retain some part of himself. This struggle and the continual revelation of the inner self through the narration is evident in the manner in which Froissard describes the scenes of brutality he witnesses.

Je n'aurais jamais imagine qu'on pût infliger à des hommes – surtout à des hommes qui ne sont sous le coup d'aucun jugement – des traitements semblables. [...] L'homme puni de fers est soumis au même régime alimentaire que l'homme puni de cellule: il n'a qu'une soupe tous les deux jours. De plus, on lui met aux pieds une barre, c'est-à-dire deux forts anneaux de fer qu'on lui passe à la hauteur des chevilles et qui sont réunis, derrière, par une barre de fer maintenue par un écrou accompagné d'un cadenas. Cette barre, longue d'environ quarante centimètres, est assez forte pour servir d'entrave à la bête féroce la plus vigoureuse. L'homme, une fois ses pieds pris dans l'engin de torture, doit se coucher à plat ventre. On lui ramène derrière le dos ses deux mains auxquelles on met aussi les fers. On lui prend les poignets dans une sorte de double bracelet séparé par un pas de vis sur lequel se meut une tringle de fer qu'on peut monter et descendre à volonté. On tourne cette tringle jusqu'à ce qu'elle serre fortement les poignets et on l'empêche de descendre en la fixant au moyen d'un cadenas. L'homme mis aux fers, on le pousse sous son tombeau. Quand on lui apporte sa soupe, tous les deux jours, il la mange comme il peut, en lapant comme un chien (Voleurs.p.101).

The mechanical detail of the method of torture makes the description of the act even more horrifying, emphasising the brutalising effect of such violence. In his description of this punishment, Froissard includes very specific dimensions and details of the device, including measurements and precise names of each of its components. The middle section of the above passage has a cold tone, almost as if the narrator is numb to the effects of the torture and more concerned with the workings of the metal bars, cuffs and joins. However, the narrator also includes

images which jar against each other, revealing the injustice and cruelty of such torture: '[c]ette barre, longue d'environ quarante centimètres, est assez forte pour servir d'entrave à la bête féroce la plus vigoureuse. L'homme, une fois ses pieds pris dans l'engin de torture, doit se coucher à plat ventre.' The juxtaposition of the ferocious animal with the man in irons emphasises the cruel absurdity of the treatment of the prisoners. This is compounded by the image of the prisoner eating his food like a dog. This passage reveals to us the way in which there is a struggle inherent in the narration to retain a sense of humanity, while discussing the strange and brutal nature of people reduced to an animalistic state. Darien succeeds in conveying the shocking simplicity of brutal acts upon the prisoners through focusing on the details of the torture, and reminding the reader of the humanity of the victim. Therefore, these powerful scenes are not oversentimentalised, but rather become stranger in the telling as their shocking nature is laid bare to the reader. The benefit, therefore, of the pseudo-documentary style of *Biribi* is that it frequently allows the events to speak for themselves. While the reader has access to the opinions and experiences of Froissard through his narration, when proceedings require detailed description the narrator-character method allows us an intimate rendering of events.

This method of narration means that the isolation of Froissard is also felt by the reader as the text turns in on itself, continually reflecting the processes of a despairing mind. It is interesting to note that Darien does not paint Froissard as an exile longing for home. There is no nostalgia in this novel, no dwelling on the past. The present tense narration reflects the immediacy of what Froissard experiences and compounds the simple horror of the conditions. It is not home

or family or even France which Jean Froissard longs for. Indeed, it is that most powerful representative of France, the army, which is subjecting Froissard to this tortuous displacement. Instead he longs for oblivion, to be anywhere out of himself and away from the brutality that surrounds him. So, this exile experience in North Africa is not rooted in the foreign geography or the exotic people but is expressed through the isolation and imprisonment of an individual, and the subsequent strangeness he recognises in himself and his fellow Frenchmen. This narrative does not look out into the landscapes and skylines of a foreign land, but rather it constantly looks inward. There is a certain claustrophobia to this exile, as Froissard spirals into self-examination; there is isolation upon isolation, humiliation upon humiliation. He becomes full of despair and self-doubt: 'Je le connais, l'affreuse bête qui se démène en moi, qui me surexcite et me torture, et plonge mon esprit dans la nuit.' (p.146) While the forward momentum of the narrative structure and the creation of the key characters of *L'Ennemi des lois* are dependant on the logic and development of André Maltère's political theories, *Biribi* and Froissard stumble forward, deeper into isolation and doubt.

### **Liberation and Resolution**

The resolution of these texts brings us to the concluding stages of this discussion and provides us with essential elements of both Barrès's and Darien's approach to the revelation of the self within the narration. The liberation of André Maltère and Jean Froissard from their respective prisons and the resolution of each text are indicative of Darien's and Barrès's own relationship to their narrators. In Barrès's novel, the outcome of André Maltère's education of Claire Pichon-



Picard reveals the fundamental lessons that the narrator is attempting to teach his readers. By comparison, Darien's treatment of Froissard's liberation demonstrates his own feelings of isolation. Both texts appear to be seeking liberation for their main characters as they leave their prisons and attempt to establish a new life. Froissard leaves the prison camp and returns to Paris; Maltère, having made connections with Claire Pichon-Picard and a foreign princess called Marina during his stay in prison, attempts to live free of conventional moral and social constraints by setting up home with them, along with their dog Velu. Even though this household arrangement may appear radical, the narrator-author of *L'Ennemi des lois* keeps a tight hold on the text, intervening and commenting throughout the closing sections of the novel. The following passage demonstrates this continual intervention. After the three characters discuss their plans, the author intervenes.

Ceux qui parlent ainsi dans cette chambre d'hôtel le peuvent oser sans que nul les traite de chimériques, car nous les vîmes atteindre ce tournant où l'homme, enfin, souffre de nuire et fait le bien par besoin, comme le voluptueux va à sa volupté. Le bonheur de Claire guérissant chez une rivale des douleurs qu'avec une sensibilité moins poussée elle eût savourées, l'angoisse d'André en qui retentissait chaque souffrance de Marina, l'ardeur même de celle-ci à soigner Velu révèlent leur instinct plus bienfaisant que les lois qu'il contredit. Et pour Velu lui-même, s'il lui reste de longs apprentissages avant qu'il conquière le droit de se soustraire aux règlements, cependant telle est la vertu du milieu où il vit qu'il y devient inoffensif (Ennemi, p.245).

Here we have a summary of the emotions of each of the characters, including the dog, and a reminder to the reader of how they have arrived at their conclusions: 'nous les vîmes atteindre ce tournant'. Each character's emotional state is described in dramatic and passionate terms: 'bonheur', 'sensibilité', 'douleurs', 'l'angoisse', 'souffrance', 'l'ardeur'. However, due to the heavy manipulative presence of the narrator in the text, the reader finds little pathos in these relationships. Their emotional links with each other are reduced to intellectual processes. The development of the relationships between Marina,

Claire and André leading up to these final passages of the novel has not built up the reader's emotional investment in the characters. Indeed, Barrès was not looking for such an investment. As he stated in his preface to the novel, he was looking to create a type of experiment in which these characters could interact with each other. The product of this method of narration, however, is that the relationships between those characters are sapped of their emotional potency and are instead built on esoteric, metaphysical arguments.

As *L'Ennemi des lois* comes to its conclusion, the narration focuses more closely on the dog, Velu. Again, the representation of the dog, just like its owners, is infused with layer upon layer of mysterious theories and language. It becomes not simply a dog, but rather, as the chapter title states, 'confesseur et martyr'. Barrès attempts a fusion of the surroundings of the group and the characters themselves with the dog, lacing them all together with theories of the self.

Autour des parterres fleuris, de légères barrières ont été opposées au bataillon volant des Velus. Et voilà les seules lois qu'il y ait dans cette société aux portes ouvertes, où nul ne demeure s'il n'y trouve son plaisir, ce sont des garde-fous. Velu II ne se fait pas une représentation suffisante des autres moi; il lui faudra de longs siècles d'esclavage, puis de soumission aux religions et aux codes, avant qu'il atteigne à l'état de ses grands amis, Marina, Claire et André. Pour ceux-ci, les autres moi existent au même degré que le leur, en sorte que les conditions du bonheur des autres se confondent avec les conditions au leur propre. Ils ne cassent pas les fleurs qu'ils aiment à respirer; qu'elles souffrissent, cela diminuerait leur plaisir; leur sensibilité affinée supprime toute immoralité (Ennemi, pp.254-5).

In this concluding paragraph of the novel, Barrès set out to synthesise his theories of *le moi* with those of the radical moral stance taken by André, Claire and Marina. The nuances of the human self are created through centuries of slavery and submission to religions and moral codes.<sup>17</sup> The freedom achieved by

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<sup>17</sup> This criticism of organised religion reveals the extent of Barrès's change in heart concerning his beliefs later in his life. By the turn of the century, he was calling himself a Catholic and later works such as *Colette Baudoche* (1909) indicate the importance he placed upon his faith in the context of his system of political and spiritual beliefs.

their collective *moi* is liberation from such restrictions. For Barrès, it is their sensitivity which vindicates them of any fault. However, what saps this argument of its power in the context of this novel is that the reader has not been witness to the development of these characters through suffering in this way. As the forward movement of the text has largely been based on argument rather than character development, the construction of 'self' in his characters does not always appear genuine and the arguments which the text claims to uphold are therefore weakened.

While Barrès sets out to conclude his novel of isolation and liberation with an argument in favour of moral freedom, Darien does not relent in his intimate portrayal of the isolation and imprisonment of Froissard in *Biribi*. The sense of isolation which was evident in Froissard's time in the camp is not resolved when he returns to Paris as a free man. His role as the outsider continues. As he travels on the train back to Paris, after he is released, he sits with other soldiers returning home. He feels no camaraderie with his fellow ex-prisoners. Small children look at him strangely because his skin is so tanned and dark.

Ils ne me regardent même pas, ces passants... Si. Une jeune fille a jeté sur moi un coup d'œil étonné et je l'ai entendue qui disait tout bas à sa compagne: - Comme il est noir! Comme il est noir!... C'est tout. Alors, on ne voit rien sur ma figure? Il n'y rien d'écrit sur mon visage? Les souffrances n'y ont pas laissé leur marque, les insultes n'y ont pas imprimé leur stigmat. Et l'on ne peut même pas, sur mes membres, comme sur l'échine d'une bête maltraitée, compter les coups que j'ai reçus, dénombrer toutes mes cicatrices! (Voleurs, p.174).

The above passage provides us with an interesting comparison between Barrès's concluding theories of the development of the self and Darien's portrayal of Froissard's struggle. While it was necessary for Barrès to outline explicitly his conclusions concerning the development of his characters along the lines of his own theories, Darien almost negates any development of his narrator-character

through the description of his appearance in the above passage. Indeed, while Barrès's text is constructing character through didactic rhetoric, Darien's character has nothing 'written' on his face. While the suffering of Barrès's characters is constructed through the intervention of the narrator, the suffering of Froissard is almost covered up in this scene: '[l]es souffrances n'y ont pas laissé leur marque, les insultes n'y ont pas imprimé leur stigmaté.' There is no physical evidence of his experiences, not even any visible scars. Again, there is a reference to the bestial nature of humanity as his limbs are compared to the beaten back of an animal. The text of Froissard's suffering has not been written on his body, and has not been read by the people around him. We are the only readers of his suffering.

The concluding paragraph of *Biribi* sees the narrator discussing the nature of his political beliefs, but in a very different manner to that of Barrès's narrator.

Je m'enforce dans les profondeurs du boulevard désert. La nuit est tombée. Le brouillard s'est épaissi... C'est dans une nuit plus noire encore que les opprimés doivent élever la voix. C'est dans une obscurité plus grande qu'ils doivent faire éclater la trompette aux oreilles de la Société – la Société, vieille gueuse imbécile qui creuse elle-même, avec des boniments macabres, la fosse dans laquelle elle tombera, moribonde-sandwich qui se balade, inconsciente, portant, sur les écriteaux qui pendent à son cou et font sonner ses tibias, un grand point d'interrogation – tout rouge (p.176).

While it is undeniable that Darien is voicing his own political opinions in this closing segment, the integrity of Froissard's character is not undermined by their inclusion. The possibility of revolt is evident here as the narrator indicates that the 'opprimés' will one day raise their voices against the impersonal and capitalised 'Société'. While the images do appear somewhat heavy-handed ('vielle gueuse imbecile', 'moribonde-sandwich'), the bitter delivery of such lines can be attributed to Froissard rather than to the author. Due to the successful synthesis of narrator, character and authorial voice through the

intimate narration and use of real events, the political dramatics of the final passage are rooted firmly in the character which has been created throughout the novel. While anarchist violence and revolt are not explicitly referred to in this passage, it is clear that Darien believed *Biribi* to be part of the 'trompette' which would sound in the ears of society.

The transformation of elements of themselves into narratives of imprisonment and freedom gives the reader clear indications of Barrès's and Darien's own reactions to anarchism in the early part of their careers. *Biribi* and *L'Ennemi des lois* reveal to us the method which each of these writers chose to construct the voice of their narrators. In order to effectively convey a sense of pathos and the reality of the brutality of the conditions which he experienced, Darien chose to create a narrator-character to tell his story. Froissard confesses to the reader and includes us in his despair and isolation. This close relationship between reader and narrator, who is closely linked with the author, allows us to see the motivation behind the reasons behind the rebellious opinions formulated by Froissard. His concluding remarks calling for revolt are no surprise. In this text, Darien depicts the creation of an anarchist and due to the power of his narrator-character, the reader has sympathy for him.

While the voice of the narrator-character is fluidly interwoven with that of the author in Darien's text, the character of Maltère is observed by Barrès's narrator in *L'Ennemi des lois* in the form of an experiment. The narrator distances himself from the events of the novel, directing the reader to be critical of the activities of Maltère. The concluding sections of the novel strive to portray scenes of moral freedom in the relationship between Maltère, Marina

and Claire. The narrator attempts to create a sense of organic harmony between the members of the household. Their collective *moi* live in freedom together in a kind of utopia. This harmony has been achieved not through violent rebellion against the existing social order, but rather through a secluded life of learning and instruction, with Maltère as the teacher. In the narrator's treatment of André Maltère, we see the elements of anarchist thought which Barrès found palatable and those which he could not agree with. He dismisses anarchist violence in the opening scenes of the novel. His imprisonment does make Maltère struggle with isolation in the way Froissard does. Indeed, his time in prison is described as merely a 'sign of punishment'. Maltère neither despairs nor struggles as a prisoner. Instead, he forms the relationships with Claire and Marina through which Barrès wished to present a version of the collective self, constructed as the connection between teacher and pupil and maintained through the organic harmony which developed. This harmonious resolution to the novel is presented as the product of reason and instruction rather than as a result of revolution. Through *L'Ennemi des lois*, Barrès distanced himself from the use of propaganda by the deed while attempting to promote his own version of a type of utopia.

The relationship between reader, narrator and author is at the centre of the differences in the narrative techniques of Barrès and Darien. Furthermore, the intimacy created by Darien and the distance established by Barrès were informed by their interpretations of anarchism. Froissard's isolation is Darien's isolation. The proximity between author, narrator and reader reflects the author's search for empathy, for witnesses to his experiences who are able to understand the causes of his despair and the need for rebellion against the

institutions which caused his suffering. In contrast to Darien's vision of himself as the isolated rebel, Barrès's vision of himself as a teacher and mentor is evident in *L'Ennemi des lois*. Not only does this reflect his aspirations to become a great and well-respected writer, it also forms a fundamental part of his vision of a collective, harmonious society. He developed this role as the instructor of his readership, reflected in the voice of his narrator, in his next trilogy of novel, *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale*.

## Chapter Four

### Education and Isolation: *Les Déracinés* and *Bas les cœurs* !

As we have already seen, the different methods of narration employed by Darien and Barrès had implications for the integrity of the characters and the pathos each author was capable of creating. During the early part of their careers Barrès and Darien were attempting to establish their own styles as political writers, and the relationship between author and narrator was indicative of each writer's view of their own status. While Darien chose to use the power of character construction and intimate narration to convey his own suffering and isolation, Barrès began to construct a narrator's voice that directed the reader by intervening in the narrative.

Many critics who have discussed Barrès's political programme as it is presented in *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale* (1897-1902) have focused on the ideological links between this second trilogy and Barrès's earlier, more metaphysical works.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, I have chosen to focus on the representation of the process of education in *Les Déracinés*, because this is an overlooked aspect of the novel which will help explain not only Barrès's views of the education system but also give us a more defined picture of his views on the isolation of the individual from his cultural roots and the consequences of this isolation. I will develop this argument through an analysis of two works

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<sup>1</sup> In particular, Zeev Sternhell's reading of the trilogy, while innovative in its reassessment of the historical significance of Barrès's political activities, is essentially ideological as it positions Barrès's nationalism at the heart of his fiction: see Zeev Sternhell, *Maurice Barrès et le nationalisme français* (Complexe, 1985). Other writers have sought to construct links between *Les Déracinés* and Barrès's earlier works through a reading of the novel which focuses on its ideology as an 'organic' product of his early mystical writing: see Jonathan Fishbane, 'From Decadence to Nationalism in the Early Writings of Maurice Barrès', *Nineteenth Century French Studies*, no. 4, vol. 13 (1985), pp.266-78.



which deal with the education of young men: Barrès's *Les Déracinés* (1897) portrays the effects of education on a group of young Lorraine men, whereas Darien's *Bas les cœurs!* (1889) is the story of a young boy in Versailles between 1870 and 1871.

There are two levels of education which occur within these novels. As we have seen, the *engagé* mode of writing which both Barrès and Darien began to develop in their early novels attempted to educate the reader through very different methods. While Barrès sought to create a *roman d'apprentissage* which instructed the reader in the theory of the collective self through didactic argument, Darien gave his readers an intimate portrait of a marginalised prisoner in order to testify to his own suffering. The education of the reader continues in *Les Déracinés* and *Bas les cœurs!* alongside the education of the young characters in the texts. Susan Suleiman's assessment of *Les Déracinés* places the novel as a *roman à thèse* which instructs its readers through both positive and negative exemplary apprenticeships. This chapter will examine how effective Barrès and Darien are at educating their readers, and how they approach the pedagogic education system in the texts.

One of the key political issues of the day during the 1880s and 1890s was the reform of the education system which was taking place, and it is therefore no surprise that both Darien and Barrès addressed this issue in their fiction. These reforms of the education system took place at the instigation of Jules Ferry through his law of 1882, and are sometimes seen as the central political acts which characterised the political programme of the Third

Republic.<sup>2</sup> Ferry's reforms are viewed by some historians (such as Pierre Albertini) as the decisive blow in the struggle between the new liberal opportunist regime and clericalists, which had a profound effect on all levels of French society.<sup>3</sup>

However, this view must not be over-stated. It was not merely a matter of ideology which produced the changes in the education system during this period. Indeed, historians such as Robert Gildea and Robert Anderson have argued that the changes wrought by Ferry were not the rupturing force in French society that some have thought them to be. Influenced by earlier social theorists such as Auguste Comte and J.S. Mill, Ferry believed democracy was impossible if a standardised education system was not first established. However, these ideals had to be compromised in the practicalities of government, as religious instruction was still permitted,<sup>4</sup> and many of the methods that the religious schools employed, such as the catechism, were used in state schools to promote the civic and moral duties of the child. The authority of the Church was only partially being replaced by the authority of the State.

At this time, the political conflict over the education system was symptomatic of the growing dominance in the late 1870s and 1880s of moderate

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<sup>2</sup> As early as April 1870 Jules Ferry was stating his most important objective as a member of the Chamber of Deputies: 'Entre toutes les nécessités du temps présent, entre tous les problèmes, j'en choisirai un auquel je consacrerai tout que j'ai d'intelligence, tout ce que j'ai d'âme, de cœur, de puissance physique et morale, c'est le problème de l'éducation du peuple. Avec l'inégalité d'éducation, je vous défie d'avoir jamais l'égalité des droits, non l'égalité théorique, mais l'égalité réelle', as quoted by Yves Gaulupeau, *La France à l'école* (Gallimard, 1992), p.79.

<sup>3</sup> 'L'œuvre de Jules Ferry marque une rupture dans l'histoire des Français. Cette révolution n'est pas dans les effectifs mais dans les esprits: la laïcité fait sentir ses effets à tous les niveaux, en matière de locaux et de personnel, comme de programmes et de contenu. [...] La rupture avec le cléricisme engage en profondeur l'avenir de la société française', Pierre Albertini, *L'École en France XIXe – XXe siècle, de la maternelle à l'université* (Hachette, 1992), p.63.

<sup>4</sup> Article 2 of the Loi Ferry of 1882 made explicit reference to the continuation of private religious instruction: 'Art.2 – Les écoles primaires publiques vaqueront un jour par semaine, en outre du dimanche, afin de permettre aux parents de faire donner, s'ils le désirent, à leurs enfants, l'instruction religieuse, en dehors des édifices scolaires', from Gaulupeau, p.164.

republicanism. As Jules Grévy became President in 1879 there began a period of relative governmental stability. Even though ministers often changed roles, there appears to have been a group of opportunist politicians who formed the backbone of the government. Jules Ferry was one such politician and he was an important figure in the regime of this period; of the eight ministries between 1879 and 1885, he was Minister of Education five times. For Ferry, therefore, the push for secularism in schools was not merely a result of the anti-clerical stance of the opportunist government of which he was a member, or a product of his own personal dislike for religious instruction; instead, the education reforms of the 1880s were part of the push for social stability which would see moderate republicanism take over as the dominant political force.

Therefore, the developments in the education system over the Second Empire and the Third Republic were not a steady and systematic removal of the Church's influence over the education of the nation's young. As studies by Robert Anderson<sup>5</sup> and Robert Gildea<sup>6</sup> have shown, the changes in education over this period were much less dramatic and more nuanced than the rhetoric of politicians like Ferry would have us believe. For one thing, the number of Catholic educated pupils did not decline sharply once the Third Republic was established. Furthermore, even after Grévy took over from MacMahon as President in 1879 and Ferry came to political prominence and legislated to promote public lay education, the enrolment numbers of lay and religious

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<sup>5</sup> See especially R.D. Anderson, *Education in France 1848 – 1870* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

<sup>6</sup> See especially Robert Gildea, *Education in Provincial France 1800 – 1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

schools demonstrate that Catholic education institutions were growing right up to the end of the century.<sup>7</sup>

A further contributing factor to the decline in private education in this period was the gradual effect of the inclusion of poorer children in the education system. As generations of children from the 1850s onwards benefited from reforms which helped them receive some form of subsidised education, there was a broadening of the social origins of those who entered into education.<sup>8</sup> This education was not, however, the passport to social mobility; a child given elementary education often did not go on to receive any secondary or superior schooling. As Gildea argues, the number of pupils from working class and petty bourgeois families who received some form of education certainly increased, but there was a limit to what such pupils were able to achieve after they left school, and this often varied region to region with the demands of industry and availability of jobs.

This is an important point. Education did not necessarily open doors for poorer pupils; it was not the golden ticket to a higher class of job or social status, but instead a system through which the social status quo adapted to suit the changing needs of industry and the economy. Indeed, it is this frustration of the educated young man which is the driving force of Barrès's second trilogy, *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale* and the theme which both he and Darien

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<sup>7</sup> In 1876, 49% of pupils in secondary education attended state-run lycées or colleges, while 20% attended lay private schools and 31% attended ecclesiastical private schools. By 1887, this ratio had changed to 56% in state-run schools, 13% in lay private schools and 31% in ecclesiastical schools. By 1899, this had changed to 51% in state-run schools, only 6% in lay private schools and 43% in ecclesiastical private schools. What these figures show is that the increase in the enrolment of pupils in state-run schools came at the expense of the lay private sector rather than the Catholic schools. Figures taken from Robert Anderson, 'The Conflict in Education', *Conflicts in French Society: Anticlericalism, Education and Morals in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Theodore Zeldin (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), p.59.

<sup>8</sup> For an in-depth analysis of this theory, together with figures which support it, see Gildea, 'Part II: Class and Education', pp.179-305.

addressed. The figure of the socially mobile youth who finds only hypocrisy and disappointment is presented as a product of an education process which has conflicting influences on young characters. The figure of the child or young man displaced through some form of training or instruction appears in various guises in both of their *œuvres*: Darien's *Biribi* (1890) could be said to be the story of such displacement (in this case both geographical and social) through military training; Barrès's *Le Culte du moi* trilogy (1888-1891) addresses the question of the formation of the self through isolation and his *Roman de l'énergie nationale* trilogy (which includes *Les Déracinés*) follows a group of young men as they leave secondary education and launch into Parisian society. This figure of the young man transformed by experience and instruction is, therefore, a key element of the works of both of these authors.

They were not the only writers to address this question. As Denis Pernot points out in *Le Roman de socialisation*, the last third of the nineteenth century saw a lot of fiction which dealt with displaced youth, whether this was 'un discours biologique qui travaille l'idée moderne d'adolescence (la naissance de la sexualité)' or 'un discours juridique qui étudie la délinquance juvénile'.<sup>9</sup> From Daudet's *Le Petit chose*, first published in 1868, to Vallès's *Le Bachelier* (1881) and Bourget's *Le Disciple* (1889), writers across the political spectrum wrote about the displacement of children and adolescents through education and the conflict between authority and the individual. The most significant of all these new versions of the *Bildungsroman* was, of course, Flaubert's *L'Éducation sentimentale* (1869), which took earlier models of the *roman d'apprentissage* and twisted them to produce a tale of failed education. As we will see, both

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<sup>9</sup> Denis Pernot, *Le Roman de socialisation, 1889-1914* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1998), p.17.

Darien and Barrès used elements of such well-known versions of the young man transfigured by education. However, it was not solely literary issues that writers of the time were addressing when they created such characters. In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, a series of *affaires* also brought the issue of displaced and disgruntled young men who were a threat to family life into the media spotlight. For example, the *affaire* of Lebeiz and Barré, two students who killed a young woman in the name of Darwinian theories, made the news in late 1878. There was also the case of a 23-year-old intellectual, Chambige, who killed his mistress in 1888 before trying to kill himself. Barrès and Darien could, therefore, be said to be plugging into an important vein of literature and current affairs at the end of the century in portraying young men affected and misdirected by education. In their portrayal of education and youth, are they creating *romans de l'échec*, in the style of Flaubert, by showing the limited ambition of those young men who were educated but restricted by social conventions? Or are these stories examples of the pedagogic novel which sought to educate the nation's youth through the example of the experiences of the characters?

It must be remembered that these novels are not direct social commentaries on the state of the education system at the time of their publication; each of these novels is set in the past, with at least 15 years between the date of publication and the years the stories are explicitly portraying. Barrès's text deals with the years 1879-1885 and the backdrop to *Bas les cœurs!* is the Franco-Prussian War, the crisis out of which the Third Republic was created. Both writers were attempting to address what they saw as the fundamental characteristics of the Third Republic: in the case of Darien, defeat,

militarism, hypocrisy and false patriotism; in the case of Barrès, *déracinement* of young people and isolation from the biological and cultural heritage of one's family and *pays*. In addressing these novels we must, therefore, broaden the term 'education' from a strictly pedagogic interpretation to a wider national construct: *Les Déracinés* and *Bas les cœurs!* are novels designed not only to critique the education system of the day, but also to instruct the reader to critique fundamental aspects of the Third Republic.

### **The Voice of the Young**

The centre of these novels is the young man, and it is to this key character which I now turn. In order to establish the nature of the isolation of the young expressed in these two novels, the voice of the young man must first be identified. How directly does he communicate with the reader? How is the voice of the young characters that form the centre of these stories active in the narration, and what effect does this have on the reader? The different narrative perspectives of each of these novels have implications for the tone of the narration and also for the way in which the reader views the young characters who are its focus. Even though Barrès and Darien were both attempting to portray the experiences of young men in the past (and are both explicit about the era they are situating their stories in), differences in distance between the character and the narrator affect the different tones they use in recounting these past events.

Darien condensed the time between events of the story and its narration through using the present tense, as he did in many of his novels, in order to create an immediate relationship between the young character and the reader.

From the very beginning of the novel, the reader is plunged into the everyday world of a twelve-year-old boy in 1870:

La guerre a été déclarée hier. La nouvelle en est parvenue à Versailles dans la soirée. M. Beaudrain, le professeur du lycée qui vient me donner des leçons tous les jours, de quatre heures et demie à six heures, m'a appris la chose dès son arrivé, en posant sa serviette sur la table. Il a eu tort. Moi qui suis à l'affût de tous les prétextes qui peuvent me permettre de ne rien faire, j'ai saisi avec empressement celui qui m'était offert. — Ah! la guerre est déclarée! Est-ce qu'on va se battre bientôt, monsieur? (Voleurs, p.181).

The opening sentence of this passage is startling and dramatic: war was declared yesterday. However, the drama of the war is soon distanced from the scene and reduced to a discussion between teacher and pupil. The boy, Jean Barbier, lives in Versailles, outside of Paris, and the news of the war did not arrive until the evening. The news is given to Jean by his teacher, M. Beaudrain, and it is through this exchange that Jean's nature begins to be revealed to the reader. It is soon clear that Jean is a boy of considerable insight and capable of manipulation. Darien presents Jean's thoughts in sophisticated terms as he decides to direct subtly the lesson in the way he wants it to go: 'Moi qui suis à l'affût de tous les prétextes qui peuvent me permettre de ne rien faire, j'ai saisi avec empressement celui qui m'était offert'. This is not the simple language of a young boy, but of a self-aware, bright pupil who knows the weaknesses of his teacher. From the outset of the narrative, Darien presents Jean's thoughts in contrast to his speech, and this is demonstrated by the juxtaposition of his manipulative language with his innocent-sounding question 'Est-ce qu'on va se battre bientôt, monsieur?' Immediately, the reader is taken into Jean's confidence. We are party to his mischief and have access to his thoughts. In *Biribi* Darien used this technique to inspire sympathy for the plight of Froissard. In *Bas les cœurs!* the tone is a little lighter and this is mainly due to the youth of



the narrator figure as the voice of the child is fused with the narration and confides in the reader.

As in *L'Ennemi des lois*, Barrès chose to narrate *Les Déracinés* using the third person and the past tense, giving the description of events a sense of authority and the narration an air of omniscience. This narration, although sometimes coloured with the thoughts of the young characters, is often written from the point of view of an all-seeing observer who, from the beginning of the novel onwards, interjects his own views into the description of the events of the story. As we are introduced to the group of young men who form the core characters of this trilogy, we are also introduced to the strong presence of the narrator. In *Le Culte du moi* trilogy and *L'Ennemi des lois*, Barrès had included sections of ideological discussion and rhetoric to support his narrative, whereas in this new trilogy he attempted to filter his ideology into the text by way of the narrator's comments. For example, at the beginning of the novel, the reader is presented with a description of the school which the boys attend and their teacher, M. Bouteiller. Following this description, there is a section in which the narrator focuses on the short-comings of the education system.

Le lycée reçoit de la collectivité où il figure un ensemble de défauts et de qualités, une conception particulière de l'homme idéal. Cet enfant qui plie sa vie selon la discipline et d'après les roulements du tambour, ne connaissant jamais une minute de solitude ni d'affection sans méfiance, ne songe même pas à tenir comme un élément, dans aucune des raisons qui le déterminent à agir, son contentement intime. Il se préoccupe uniquement de donner aux autres une opinion avantageuse de lui. [...] Toujours pressés les uns contre les autres, inquiets sans trêve de sembler ridicules, les lycéens développent monstrueusement, à ce régime et sous le système pédagogique de places, une seule chose, leur vanité (Œuvre III, p.12).

Whereas Darien's text is immediately seen from the viewpoint of his child-narrator, *Les Déracinés* brings the reader of Barrès back on to familiar territory: the political and philosophical rhetoric of his narrator. Barrès's philosophy of the self, linked to cultural and biological heritage, which was presented to the

reader in *Le Culte du moi* trilogy, has developed into a collectivist discourse which focuses on the separation of individuals from their family and regional roots and the consequences of this separation. This brings us back to Suleiman's analysis of this text as a *roman à thèse*, which sees the narrator as the positive educator in the text, striving to reveal the short-comings of the Third Republic through the example of the uprooted young men.<sup>10</sup> This passage reveals the Barrèsian theory of the development of the self, as he constructs an image of the damage inflicted on this development by the crowded, unfeeling institution of the state lycée. The process of isolation from the *pays* and the collective *moi* of family and history, this *déracinement*, is achieved, according to Barrès, through education.<sup>11</sup> Even at the very beginning of the text, the narrator's voice is, therefore, very insistent and explicit in its presentation of the ideology which is behind Barrès's critique of this type of education.

This interventionist narrative technique, while a departure from his earlier method of large sections of text devoted to expounding various works of literature or philosophy, still has implications for the amount of dialogue, description and judgement in the narrative. This is compounded by the fact that *Les Déracinés* does not focus on one adolescent in particular, but rather on a group of young men. This, combined with the third-person narration, has the effect of fracturing the voice of the young characters in the narrative. In contrast with the intimacy achieved in *Bas les cœurs!* between the reader and the

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<sup>10</sup> Suleiman, p.85.

<sup>11</sup> As T.J Field notes in 'Barrès and the Image of *Déracinement*', *French Studies*, 29, 3 (July 1975), pp.294-9, the use of the verb 'déraciner' changed during the latter half of the nineteenth century as it took on nationalist meaning. It was Paul Bourget in *Cosmopolis* who first used 'déraciné' as a noun in reference to a person. The thesis of his text is that the *cosmopolites* are *déracinés* who live as parasites, draining society. While Barrès first used the term in an article for *Le Voltaire* in 1887, it was not until *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale* that the term came to take such a central place in his critique of modern, centralised society.

narrator-character, in *Les Déracinés* the reader only has access to glimpses of the thoughts of the young characters. Barrès's use of third-person narration to represent the experiences of a group of boys means that there are scenes of dialogue between the characters interspersed with paragraphs of description or the narrator's opinion. This style of narration is often explicit in its conclusions and its judgements, asking the reader to agree:

M. Bouteiller ne devrait-il pas prendre souci du caractère général lorrain? Il risque de leur présenter une nourriture peu assimilable. Ne distingue-t-il pas des besoins à prévenir, des mœurs à tolérer, des qualités ou des défauts à utiliser? Il n'y a pas d'idées innées; toutefois des particularités insaisissables de leur structure décident ces jeunes Lorrains à élaborer des jugements et des raisonnements d'une qualité particulière. En ménageant ces tendances naturelles, comme on ajouterait à la spontanéité, et à la variété de l'énergie nationale !... C'est ce que nie M. Bouteiller. Quoi ? à la façon d'un masseur qui traite les muscles de client d'après le tempérament qu'il lui voit, le professeur devrait approprier son enseignement à ces natures de Lorrains et aux diversités qu'elles présentent ? C'est un système que M. Bouteiller n'examine même pas. (Œuvre III, p.23)

The above passage is an interesting one as it combines Barrès's political language ('caractère general lorrain', 'tendances naturelles', 'l'énergie nationale') with a series of questions which beg agreement from the reader. Towards the end of the passage, it even appears as if the reader is entering into the discussion and our reactions are entering into the text: 'Quoi? à la façon d'un masseur [...] C'est un système que M. Bouteiller n'examine même pas.' While Darien seeks to collude with his reader through the intimacy of the narration, Barrès directly addresses his reader, aiming to act as a fellow observer of his character. This is, however, observation which is directed not by the reader but by the narrator, who prods and prompts the reader to come to the same conclusions.

This variation in the narrative perspective also alters the use of humour in the text. A brief examination of the difference in the humour of these texts will reveal further elements of the variation between Barrès's and Darien's

methods of narration. The youth of Darien's narrator allows him to colour the text with observations and comments which draw their humour from a child's perspective. In the case of Jean's description of the household servant, Catherine, his affection for her is evident alongside his mockery.

Elle est plate comme une limande et ça lui est à peu près égal. Quand on la taquine là-dessus, elle se borne à fournir une explication très simple : elle a monté en graine tout d'un coup – comme les asperges – et ce qu'elle a gagné en hauteur, elle l'a perdu en largeur. Elle ressemble à un gendarme : un gendarme qui aurait un gros nez rouge, qui mangerait de la bouillie avec son sabre et qui aurait, en guise de moustaches, un gros poireau poilu de chaque côté du menton. Les poireaux, voilà le malheur de Catherine. Elle en a trois à la figure et trois douzaines sur les mains. Elle affirme n'en pas avoir autre part. – Pas un seul ! s'écrie-t-elle en roulant de gros yeux. J'en fournirai les preuves à qui voudra. Personne ne lui en a jamais demandé (Voleurs, p.186).

This passage demonstrates Jean's child-like humour as he makes fun of her build and her warts. It also reveals the freedom of narration Darien gains from using a child-narrator. In *Biribi* we saw how the course of the narrative was governed by the spiralling, increasing despair of Froissard. In *Bas les cœurs!* the text is able to rush from image to image as Jean Barbier tells us his thoughts. His first thought of Catherine in the above passage is of her flat chest, which immediately leads him onto her explanation of her build. Then he jumps to comparing her with a gendarme, an image which he elaborates upon which leads him onto the subject of her warts. This leads him to report to us a conversation he has had with Catherine on the subject, ending with a witty aside to the reader. This free construction of the narration not only generates humour, but also makes the character of Jean more believable as a young boy.

What adds to the authenticity of the child's voice in *Bas les cœurs!* is Jean's suspicion of adults. When explanations are insufficient and appear untrustworthy, Jean is aware of this and relates his suspicions and frustrations to his confidante, the reader:

A toutes mes questions sur les chiens écrasés, les aveugles et les boiteux, les chevaux qui se cassent un jambe et les morts qu'on mène au cimetière, elle [Catherine] faisait la

même réponse : « C'est le bon Dieu qui l'a puni. » -Catherine, sais-tu pourquoi le poisson rouge qui était dans l'aquarium est mort ? -C'est le bon Dieu qui l'a puni. Ça m'a paru insuffisant – et douteux. Aujourd'hui, je me demande comment j'ai pu arriver à trouver du plaisir dans la société d'un être aussi borne. Je la méprise un peu. Elle m'ennuie beaucoup. Elle s'en est aperçue, et en souffre. Tant pis. (Voleurs, p.189)

While there is humour in this scene, the affectionate portrait Jean first paints of Catherine is turning a little sour. He distrusts her and is dissatisfied with the answers she offers to his questions. Darien also seems to be mocking the notion of God's providential justice in which Catherine believes. It is obvious to the boy that this cannot possibly be true and this derisive attitude towards religious superstition of this kind is indicative of Darien's own views on the subject. The last phrase is telling: while she is hurt that he is bored by her, he seems not to care. 'Tant pis' reveals, in a small but significant way, Jean's increasing frustration with instruction he is receiving, a frustration which was also evident in the opening scenes with his teacher, M. Beaudrain.

The humour that Barrès used in *Les Déracinés* possesses less pathos and is more embittered against the effect education has on the young men. Due to the fragmented group of characters and their muted presence in the narration, the irony is generated not by dialogue between characters, but rather by the observations of the narrator. Barrès used irony not only to convey the misleading education they receive from Bouteiller, but also to comment on the boys' own naivety. However, this is not a comic device which produces pathos, as in the Darien text, but rather a representation of their naivety that is tinged with tragedy. They have misguided belief in Bouteiller, who is shown to be the agent of the *déracinement* of the young Lorraine men. It is their naïve persistence in following his instructions when they have left school which leads to their ultimate downfall. In particular the fate of two of the group, Moucheffrin and Racadot, demonstrates the tragedy of their faith in their teacher. The

following passage illustrates Barrès's use of irony in the narration to portray Moucheffrin and Racadot as miserable and naïve figures. In dire straits, Moucheffrin and Racadot go to visit Bouteiller to ask for work. They find their former teacher eating:

Moucheffrin et Racadot regardèrent ces deux petits œufs, la bonne pièce bien chaude, pleine de livres, de journaux, de dossiers, la haute figure, si grave, si noble de Bouteiller. Ils songèrent à tout ce qu'ils devaient lui proposer : d'être ses hommes de paille, de l'aimer, de le servir. Mais, sûr de soi comme il se montrait, sollicité, absorbé par tant de travaux, sans doute il avait déjà ses créatures. Ils entrevirent qu'ils étaient à ses yeux du néant. Ils sortirent très gauches, très humiliés et très remerciaants. (Œuvre III, p.103)

The reader is well aware that Bouteiller is neither 'si grave' nor 'si noble'. Here we have the opinions of Moucheffrin and Racadot woven into the narrative to create irony. The final sentence of the passage compounds this irony, bringing out the sense of blind faith in Bouteiller and increasing self-destruction which is evident in these two characters.

Thus, the different narrative perspectives of *Bas les cœurs!* and *Les Déracinés* produce different effects on the reader as they allow varying levels of access to the young characters of the novels. The type of narration and the tense in which it is written, the temporal distance between the narration and the events it is portraying, the focus on the characters themselves (whether they are part of a group or alone), and the use of humour to produce sympathy or criticism, all combine to produce the voice of the young characters in the narrative. Barrès's narrator is distanced from the characters, observing them, using them almost as examples to the reader, as a warning of the consequences of bad instruction. The voices of the characters in *Les Déracinés* are very much controlled by the narrator, and he directs the conclusions the reader comes to about the characters. If Barrès's narrator is reporting the lives of these young men as a warning, as a negative exemplary apprenticeship, then Jean is telling his life as it occurs in

*Bas les cœurs!* Darien's decision to situate the narrative in close proximity to the events which are unfolding, combined with the confessional style of the first-person narration, means that the reader has complete access to the thought and feelings of the young character. Through their various techniques, Barrès and Darien each represented the voice of the young at varying levels of intimacy and candour. The voices of the young men in the texts are either revealed or suppressed. Darien uses Jean's voice as an agent for his own while Barrès uses his young characters as examples, signs or symbols of real humanity rather than intimate portrayals.

### **Family and Home**

The relationship between the reader and the young characters of these novels are very different. This can also be said of the relationships each author constructed between the young men and their families. What experiences do these voices relate and how did each author portray the isolation experienced by their young characters? Who or what causes this isolation and what effect does it have on the boys who are the focus of these novels?

A place that presents a series of complicated relationships for these young boys is the family home, a place in various stages of fracturing. These texts address the time of life when adolescents begin to be more independent in their thinking and when the move from primary into secondary education (whether in a *collège*, *lycée* or by tutoring) takes the young person out of the home and into the world. For Darien, the growth of independent thinking in Jean is represented through the conflict between father and son. This is a conflict between the individual and those who have authority over him, whether that is

father in the home or the teacher in the classroom.<sup>12</sup> The influence of education can either challenge the authority of the home or reinforce it, and for Darien the complicity between M. Barbier and Beaudrain represents the forces which seek to make Jean conform to bourgeois models of thinking and behaviour. In contrast to Darien's promotion of the individual, the family is central to the Barrèsian theory of the collective self.<sup>13</sup> The process of *déracinement* in this text is not only removing the young men from the Lorraine region, but also from their family homes. How are these homes presented to the reader in these novels and what part do they play in the disillusionment of these young men?

It is undeniable that the mother and the father are treated very differently in both of these novels. The father is often the instigator of education, either taking the child to school or bringing a tutor of his choice into the home. The mother, if she is present, is often the parent who encourages freedom of thought and imagination in the young man. The father is often the public face of the family, going out to work and do business, whereas the mother's role is more connected with private family life. The starkest contrast between the role of mother and father is perhaps in *Bas les cœurs!* Jean's mother is dead and his father is consistently represented as a middle-class hypocrite. Indeed, it is implied that his father's brutal nature was the cause of his mother's death; after

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<sup>12</sup> Walter Redfern sees this relationship as part of a model of destructive family relationships which exist in *Le Voleur* and also *L'Épaulette*. He links the Barbier family to the crooked uncle of *Le Voleur* and the criminal father in *L'Épaulette*. These relationships are soured by the damaging effects of money on family dynamics. See Redfern, pp.21-2.

<sup>13</sup> Barrès transformed his close relationship with his own parents into a symbol of the metaphysical link he believed existed between himself and his *pays*, Lorraine. In his *Cahiers* Barrès made metaphorical connections between his youth, the earth in which he was rooted and the deep water of his family which no eye could penetrate: 'État mystique [...] J'ai su que j'étais eux et que c'était ma destinée, ma nécessité de les maintenir aussi longtemps que je pourrais, comme un nageur qui sauve les siens jusqu'à ce qu'il s'engloutisse avec eux, ou trouve une barque. [...] Cette eau si profonde où l'œil étranger ne peut indiscretement pénétrer, dont rien ne peut troubler le sentiment au milieu d'une nature muette, en glissant elle me chuchote ce qui s'accorde avec les pulsations les plus vraies de mon cœur', *Mes Cahiers, 1896-1923* (Plon, 1963), p.20.



the arguments which precipitated her death, Jean is aware of the violent side of his father's nature:

J'ai encore de ces cris-là dans les oreilles, de ces cris haineux, mal étouffés par les murs, et qui venaient souvent, la nuit, me terrifier dans mon petit lit. Je savais que mes parents se disputaient et s'insultaient, que mon père bousculait ma mère *pour de l'argent*. Et depuis ce temps-là j'ai le dégoût et de la peur de l'argent. J'ai presque deviné, à douze ans, tout ce que peut faire commettre d'horrible et d'infâme une ignoble pièce de cent sous. J'ai grandi au milieu de discussions d'intérêt coupées de scènes de plus en plus violentes jusqu'à la mort de ma mère. Ces scènes ont effacé en moi, à la longue, son image douce et bonne, et je ne peux plus la voir quand j'évoque son souvenir, que pâle et craintive, baissant la tête, pauvre bête maltraitée sans pitié par son maître, en fuyant sous les coups. J'ai gardé aussi, de ce temps-là, une grande frayeur de mon père [emphasis author's own] (Voleurs, p.190).

This powerful passage describing the deterioration of the relationship between Jean's parents highlights that which Jean sees as the cause of the troubles in the home: money. His father's love of the 'ignoble pièce de cent sous' is, according to Jean, the root of the difficulties, as it causes fights between his parents and is the motivating force behind his father's actions. There is an echo here of the cruelty of *Biribi* as Darien again uses the metaphor of the brutalised person as a beast when his mother is described as the 'pauvre bête maltraitée'. This scene which establishes a sinister side to M. Barbier appears in the second chapter of the novel, giving the reader the background to his character early on in the narrative.

M. Barbier's character is also revealed to Jean, and consequently to the reader, through his dealings with the invading Prussians. He is a businessman who is patriotic when the war is going well for the French army, yet faced with the Prussian victory and occupation he shows none of the courage of his convictions. When there is business to be done, he is eager to sympathise with those he is talking to. For example, when Jean's father is dealing with M. Müller and M. Hermann, who are from Alsace, he is ready with his standard reply of 'Infâme!' when they give their opinions on the Prussian invasion: '—La race

teutonne a été de toute antiquité une race de voleurs, affirme Müller. –Et quand on pense, ajoute Hermann, que ces brigands rêvent de s'annexer notre chère Alsace, notre Alsace si loyale, si honnête, si française!' (p.274) Barbier's patriotic fervour soon pales, however, when he is faced with the reality of a few Prussian soldiers: 'J'ai crié « Vive la France! » Les Prussiens ne m'ont rien dit, mais mon père m'a flanqué une gifle. –As-tu l'intention de nous faire fusiller, galopin?'. (p.275) The juxtaposition of these two incidents compounds the reader's impression of M. Barbier as a corrupt and manipulative businessman. Through his honest recounting of the private conversations he is witness to, Jean allows the reader to see through his father's business-like politeness and pragmatism to his true hypocrisy; the reader is aware of this because Jean is aware of it.

His father's bourgeois opportunism is also evident in his attitude towards the elections which occur after the Third Republic is declared. It is clear from the tone of the narrative that Jean is conscious of his father's shallow attitudes:

Les élections ont lieu sous la direction du maire de Versailles chargé des fonctions du préfet. Le département de Seine-et-Oise a élu Thiers, Jules Favre et Gambetta. Mon père a voté pour Jules Favre. Il ne sait pas pourquoi. M. Legros a voté pour Thiers et il sait pourquoi. C'est pour pouvoir faire un calembour. Le marchand de vins du coin a voté pour Gambetta et M. Legros répète toute la journée, en riant: - Les marchands de vin aiment Gambetta et les marchands de tabac, Thiers (Voleurs, p.301).

Here we have an example of not only the hypocrisy of Jean's father, but also of other men in the town. The elections are reduced to a joke amongst the men, which itself appears ridiculous from the perspective of Jean. The pun M. Legros is making ('tabac, Thiers', tabatière) reduces voting for Thiers to a pointless act. Through Jean's deadpan explanation of the conversation, the humour is sapped from it and the emptiness of their actions is evident to the reader. Indeed, Darien's method of reporting conversations Jean has overheard in this way

filters the scene through Jean's perspective, draining it of any humour or spontaneity.

When the reader encounters Jean's father, it is often in this type of conversation with other businessmen or people from the town, discussing commerce, the war or the invading Prussians. Such conversations often feel like staged dialogue, filled with polite clichés and punctuated by M. Barbier's exclamations of 'infâme!' 'haut les cœurs!' and '*sursum corda!*' at regular intervals. It is almost like a code of politeness, manners which pass for morality, and his father seeks to educate Jean to speak and act in this way. The title of the novel is indicative of the effect this has on Jean. For example, when Jean meets M. Hoffner, with whom his father does business, he is intrigued by his appearance. His father attempts to modify the way Jean speaks about M. Hoffner:

Ce nez est extraordinaire, mais il est naturel. [...] –C'est un nez d'Israélites, me dit mon père, le soir. M. Zabulon Hoffner est israélite. –Ah! c'est un juif! –Un Israélite! Il ne faut jamais dire: Juif. C'est très impoli. –Ah!...Il a un nom allemand. –C'est possible, fait mon père, mais il n'est pas allemand. Il est luxembourgeois. Ce n'est pas la même chose. (Voleurs, p.256).

This passage demonstrates the nature of the instruction Jean's father seeks to give him. He wishes to educate his son to be tactful and polite to those with whom he does business. The public persona of Jean's father is, therefore, that of the polite businessman, the 'bon bourgeois'. He is presented as almost a type, as representative of a certain class, and an important element of this representation of the bourgeois class is the language they use.

The references to race in the above passage were, of course, very pertinent at the time of the novel's publication, Drumont's *La France Juive* having appeared only three years previously. Darien deliberately puts the word 'impolit' in the mouth of M. Barbier in reaction to Jean calling Hoffner a Jew.

There is no political comment, no explicit reference to the argument for or against the growing support of anti-Semitism. Instead, through subtle humour and use of language, Darien highlights the hypocrisy of men such as M. Barbier; such a difficult and potentially offensive subject is best avoided and smoothed over through the use of the appropriate language. Jean sees through his father's public face of politeness and reveals to the reader the hypocrisy he sees through contrasting the conversations he is witness to between his father and other men like him, and the way his father acts towards his family. He recognises that his father is motivated not by political conviction or even love of his family, but rather by money. The ultimate demonstration of this had happened long before the story begins, in the relationship between his parents. The effect of this is long lasting and still is evident in the twelve year old Jean; he has been long aware of his father's true character and, through the intimate nature of the narration, the reader is aware of this too. His father's influence over Jean, which extends to his formal education as he brings a tutor in to the home, has been soured.

Nor does Jean identify with other members of the household. His older sister Louise is portrayed as a fickle, false girl. For example when Jean's grandfather dies (who also was a dishonest businessman), she descends into sobs: 'Mais l'accent est faux, le geste exagéré; les inflexions brusques de l'intonation, les soupirs, les contorsions du visage, tout est contrefait, dissonant; et l'agitation outrée qu'affecte ma sœur achève de disfigurer le peu émotion qu'elle a pu ressentir.' (Voleurs, p.312) Again, Darien portrays the falseness of family relations, but in this example he focuses on the shallow nature of emotional attachments. As we saw through the study of *Biribi*, Darien's method

of writing was not to create over-sentimentalised fiction, but rather to aim to write from genuine experience and construct texts of genuine emotion. It is fitting, therefore, that one of his methods of criticising the hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie in this novel is to depict a scene of false emotion. While *Biribi* presented the reader with the isolation felt by Froissard in reaction to the hypocrisy of patriotism and militarism, *Bas les cœurs!* gives us another form of isolation, that of the individual who reveals the hypocrisy of family ties and bourgeois business and trade.

The sham sentiments and artificially constructed language of his family is not evident in Jean's narration. Jean's problematic home situation is expressed through curt phrases which encapsulate his boredom, loneliness and frustration: 'Pour le moment, mon père me gêne. Catherine m'ennuie. Louise m'embête. Versailles m'assomme. Voilà.' (Voleurs, p.191) The simple construction of much of his narration only goes to emphasise the artificial nature of much of what he observes in his home. Jean is open to influence from outside the home because there is no one in the home who sympathises or identifies with him. As we shall see, he looks to other mentor figures to provide him with some guidance. Jean is physically present in the family home, yet he feels like an outsider in it and this isolation from his family is present in the text itself as the narration accentuates the contrast between the characters. Just as in *Biribi*, Darien champions the cause of the individual in the face of marginalisation. Again, there are echoes of Stirner's egoism, as the closest of relationships are revealed to be empty and the only significant relationship Darien's narrator appears to form is with the reader.

This process of isolation is different to the one experienced by the young men who form the focus of Barrès's *Les Déracinés*. Whereas M. Barbier approves of the education Jean receives outside of the school system, for the families of the young men in *Les Déracinés*, it is a process which divides the boys from their homeland and their families. Indeed, the very title of the novel, 'The Uprooted', gives a clear indication of the importance of this process to the work as a whole. Before I go on to discuss the education the young *lorrains* receive at the hands of Bouteiller, it is necessary to establish what they are being uprooted from. Are their homes as fractured as Jean Barbier's? Is it just the instruction they receive at school which leads them to Paris or do they too feel alienated in their family homes?

From the very first scene of the novel, the narrator introduces the reader into the classroom of the boys, under the tutelage of Bouteiller. The first part of the novel takes place in the classroom, but the majority of the text focuses on the time the group of young men spend in Paris. This is a story which concentrates on the consequences of the instruction they receive. In contrast to Darien's writing, we hardly get any glimpses into the family lives of the boys. There are no scenes set in their homes, no discussions between parent and child, no direct demonstrations of the difficult relationship between son and father. In the early parts of the novel, when the narrator is describing the education the boys receive, he makes interventions into the narrative, commenting on the effects of this instruction on the boys' home-lives and their decision to go to Paris:

Quelle conception auraient-ils de l'humanité? Ils perdent de vue leurs concitoyens et tout leur cousinage ; ils se déshabituent de trouver chez leurs père et mère cette infailibilité ou même ce secours qui maintiendraient la puissance et l'agrément du lien filial. Les femmes ne sont pas à leurs yeux des êtres d'une vie complète, mais seulement un sexe. [...] Isolés de leurs groupes de naissance et dressés seulement à concourir entre eux, des adolescents prennent de la vie, de ses conditions et de son but la plus pitoyable intelligence (Œuvre III, p.13).

The 'uprooting' the boys undergo is described in largely abstract terms, and the above passage is typical of this: families and homes become 'leurs groupes de naissance'; their friendship as a group is expressed as 'dressés seulement à concourir entre eux'; the boys' move to Paris is described as 'des adolescents prennent de la vie'. Whereas Darien used the intimacy of the first-person narrative to convey with pathos Jean's sense of isolation and frustration with his home, Barrès's approach is abstract, making it more of an ideological argument, but one with less emotional impact. This argument is the essential thesis of the novel: the uprooting of the young men from their homes and from their *pays* will have disastrous consequences.

This abstraction of the families of the boys into an ideological argument develops as the narrator goes on to examine the family background and status of each boy in turn. There is a variety of social origins in the group, from the rich and landed Saint-Phlin to Racadot, whose ancestors were peasants, and the unwashed Moucheffrin whose father is a photographer. The difficulties which arise as a result of these differences in social and financial standing are presented in the text in a straightforward, factual manner: 'Suret-Lefort et Gallant de Saint-Phlin sont de Barrois. Une partie de ce plateau, le Barrois mouvant, ne fut réunie à la France qu'avec la Lorraine, en 1766. Bien que voisins, les deux camarades ne se visitent jamais, à cause des distances sociales de leurs familles' (p.43). The clipped, precise tone of this description is typical of the narration of this section of the novel. The homes and families these boys come from are reduced to crisp phrases which place them in their social and economic context for the benefit of the reader. In the above extract, the difficulties produced by differences in wealth and social status are not the focus

of the paragraph, but are rather in the background, in favour of the history of the Barrois.

The factual reporting of family life continues as the narrator makes reference to the death of Renaudin's father : 'Alfred Renaudin, fils d'un modeste contrôleur des contributions indirectes, fut soudaine, en août 1880, par la mort de son père, placé dans la nécessité de soutenir sa famille. Le jeune homme sollicita son ancien professeur et lui annonça qu'avec sa mère et une sœur de vingt ans, il émigrerait à Paris' (p.50). What is significant about this piece of text is the position of the phrase which refers to his father's death within the sentence. The focus of the first sentence is Renaudin's sudden need to support his family; his father's death becomes a subordinate clause. There is no dialogue between the mother and son about the father's death, no emotive discussion between friends, no interior monologue from Renaudin concerning his feelings on the subject. The significance of this death is that it means Renaudin must seek his own fortune, and for this he turns to Bouteiller for help as he begins to pursue a career in journalism. The different family backgrounds of the young men are used by the narrator to provide motivation for their activities in Paris and are provided to the reader in a functional way. Barrès does not attempt to create a profound structure of family flaws or deep emotional wounds, such as Zola used to predestine his Rougon-Macquart characters through the instillation of hereditary flaws in their make-up; instead, he gives his characters a more straightforward set of motivations. Renaudin must look for work because his father has died, Rœmerspacher must come to Paris because he wants to train to be a doctor, Racadot must study to be a notary in Paris because his father wants to delay giving him his inheritance.



In *Les Déracinés*, therefore, the reader does not witness the direct workings of the various families or the nuances of the relationships between parents and sons, but rather the consequences of the problems and issues which are inherent in them. This is due to the style of narration Barrès chose to use and also because the text is removed from the family homes. This does allow the narrator to focus on the group of young men and their experiences in Paris, but it also removes some of the potential pathos; if the alienation from their families was portrayed in more detail, perhaps the reader would feel the *déracinement* more acutely.

The one relationship that is described more fully is that between Racadot and his father, although this too is somewhat removed from the reader as it is played out in a series of letters. Early in the text, both Racadot and Moucheffrin are portrayed as rather pathetic figures in school, and Racadot's social origins go on to play a key part in his downfall.<sup>14</sup> Much later in the text, these two attempt to do business with the rest of the group concerning the political paper *La Vraie République*. By this time, their lives have diverged; they are involved in different professions with different fortunes. Racadot and Moucheffrin are isolated from Sturel, Roemerspacher and the rest. The narrator expresses this alienation in terms of social origin:

La vie de Racadot, sous son tartre de banalité, a vraiment un rude éclat. C'est une situation d'une valeur historique. Voilà un petit-fils de serfs lorrains, hâtivement introduit, juxtaposé plutôt parmi ces jeunes capitalistes. Cet ensemble n'était maintenu que par l'étau universitaire; s'il se desserre, et les intérêts ne s'étant point liés, on constate qu'il n'y avait pas entre eux de sentiment, ni même de simple agrément. Le mécanisme instinctif de cette collectivité tend à expulser les Racadot, les Moucheffrin, à les rejeter dans le prolétariat, à les dégrader (Œuvre III, p.274).

<sup>14</sup> 'Au lycée, il [Racadot] travailla lourdement, sans la réussite que son effort eût méritée'; 'Antoine Moucheffrin est fils d'un photographe de Longwy (Meurthe-et-Moselle), assez brave homme, mais si misérable!' (Œuvre III, pp.48-9).

This fracturing of the group of *lorrains* on the grounds of class and money is again presented in an abstract way, as a sort of social mechanism. This process has consequences for Racadot and Mouchefrin, as it is the primary reason they descend into crime and eventually murder Astiné Avarain, a rich mistress of Sturel. This alienation from their friends and descent into desperation is not presented as an internal conflict within the characters, or as emotionally charged dialogue between them, but is rather condensed into a 'mécanisme instinctif de cette collectivité'. The narrator is attempting to depict the governing forces of these characters through the use of such politically charged terms as 'serfs lorrains', 'jeunes capitalistes', 'collectivité', 'le prolétariat'. Such language reveals the combination of Barrès's socialist rhetoric with that of his growing belief in national and regional identity.<sup>15</sup> The isolation of Racadot and Mouchefrin also has consequences for the plot, and this is dealt with in a direct manner by the narrator. In the paragraph following the passage above, the narrator is at pains to point out the difficulties this creates: 'Bien naturellement, c'est un grand problème pour nous, qui avons vu Racadot entrer par le lycée dans la classe bourgeoise, de savoir si cette expulsion se fera et dans quelles conditions' (p.274). There is, therefore, a process of abstraction which occurs not only in portraying the alienation of Racadot and Mouchefrin in social or financial terms, but also in the construction of the plot. The narrator is not only directing the reader to formulate opinions about characters and situations, but he

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<sup>15</sup> In using familiar political and national images, such as the use of 'serfs lorrains' or 'collectivité' in this context, Barrès was drawing on well-known images in order to connect with his reader through a common political language. Indeed, as Phillip Ouston points out in *The Imagination of Maurice Barrès* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), this was a well-used technique by Barrès in his journalism and later fiction as he turn his attention more directly towards nationalist issues. Through the use of such familiar terms, he was able to plug into what Ouston terms 'the collective imagination' in order to communicate his political message more effectively. See Ouston, p. 11.

is also focusing their gaze on the workings of the novel itself. If the problems they experience due to their social origins are a motivation for the characters, they are also a motivation for the development of the plot. Through interventions of this nature by the narrator, the text becomes more self-aware and the reader too becomes more aware of the mechanisms behind the narrative.

Although there are no direct representations of parents or homes in *Les Déracinés*, the closest we get are letters; the profound isolation the young men impose upon themselves from their *pays* takes us right to the heart of the characters and the text. Through the case of Racadot in particular, the reader is made aware of the problems which are caused by their desire to remove themselves from their familial roots. Indeed, family roots have direct consequences for each of the young men. It is clear that, as Suleiman argues, while the young men from landed families act as positive examples in the text, those who come from non-landed backgrounds suffer the most from the process of *déracinement*.<sup>16</sup> The narrator directs and distances us from the relationships between the parents and their sons and abstracts the young men's isolation into social and financial problems. However, the process he is trying to convey, that of *déracinement*, is inextricably bound up with the alienation of the boys from their families and with Barrès's own politics which he continually filtered into the narrative. Family relationships are reduced to sources of motivations within

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<sup>16</sup> Saint-Phlin and Rœmerspachers, the two young men from landed families, both have positive resolutions to their stories, as the former leaves Paris to bring up his own family in Lorraine and the latter stays in Paris, marries a Lorraine girl and chooses Taine and Jules Soury as masters. The other four young men have much less favourable fates: Racadot is guillotined for murder; Moucheffrin turns up in later volumes of the trilogy as a blackmailer and an *agent provocateur*; Renaudin becomes a corrupt journalist; and Suret-Lefort becomes a radical politician. It is only Sturel who serves as both a positive and negative example: although he frees himself of Bouteiller's influence, he does not succeed in finding a replacement mentor. Writing in 1897, Barrès placed particular emphasis on Saint-Phlin as a positive example: 'Je montre comment ces jeunes gens sont déracinés; je ferai voir comment Saint-Phlin sait demeurer raciné; je ferai voir en outre les efforts des autres pour reprendre racine' (Cahiers, pp.91-2).

the narrative to demonstrate Barrès's theory of *déracinement*. This abstraction saps the emotional power of family relationships. While Darien constructed hollow family ties to demonstrate emotional isolation of Jean, Barrès constructed symbolic homes and families which represent his theories of the power of the *pays* and collective identity. The project to use the novel as a type of experiment to which Barrès presented in his preface to *L'Ennemi des lois* was clearly continuing in *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale*.

There are, therefore, varying levels of isolation in the homes represented in Barrès's and Darien's novels. This is evident not only in the way each author describes the parents or home of the young characters, but also in the presence of the parents in the text and the way they interact with their sons. The depiction of Jean and his father involves the son observing or retelling his father's dialogue to others, and therefore the reader processes events through the gaze of the young boy. It is centred on Jean's frustration and dismay at the discrepancy he observes between his father's public persona and his private actions. Barrès approaches the home in a different manner. His characters are removed from it. The parents are absent from the text, only represented by letters or sparse information relayed by the narrator. This is a further step of alienation to that experienced by Jean Barbier. Not only do Racadot, Moucheffin and the others feel isolated from their families and homes, but they are physically removed from them, and the parents are consequently removed from the text.

The fracturing of the home which occurs when the son leaves to be educated and make his way in the world is represented in various guises in these novels, with varying levels of isolation experienced by the young characters. However, the home and family are not the only factors in the alienation of these

young men. How do Barrès and Darien represent the teachers and schools of Jean and the seven young men from Lorraine? If they cannot find guidance or sympathy at home, do they turn to anyone else outside of the family?

### Teachers

The isolation experienced by Jean in his home and relayed to us through his intimate narration is not just a product of his relationships within his family. Darien's critique of the bourgeois household extends to the teacher who comes in to the house to give Jean lessons. In both of these novels, the teachers are approved by a source of formal authority, whether that is the state or the parents. In the case of Jean Barbier, his teacher, M. Beaudrain, is a friend of his father who is brought into the home to tutor the young boy. The teacher of Sturel, Roemerspacher, Saint-Phlin, Racadot, Moucheffrin, Renaudin and Suret-Lefort is M. Bouteiller. They attend a public school, which is seemingly approved of by their parents, although the consequences of their education drive a wedge between them and their families. The process of socialisation of the child that occurs at school, the process which takes them out of the jurisdiction of the home and places them under the guidance of another and amongst the company of their peers, is very present in these texts. The amount of influence of the teacher and their peers on the boys is, however, different in each text, ranging from complete removal from the home as a consequence of the instruction they receive to a sense of isolation within the home.

The teacher is, therefore, the agent of transformation for the pupils in these texts, sanctioned by the parents and the state. The teacher with the most transformative influence on his pupils is M. Bouteiller of *Les Déracinés*. It is

under his guidance that his pupils leave Lorraine and seek their fortune in Paris, thus uprooting themselves from their *pays*. He is present throughout the novel, as he too moves to Paris to begin a political career, but it is the first chapter in which he is most explicitly portrayed. Indeed, his presence is the cause of the emotion in the opening paragraph of the text:

En octobre 1879, à la rentrée, la classe de philosophie du lycée de Nancy fut violemment émue. Le professeur, M. Paul Bouteiller, était nouveau, et son aspect, le son de sa voix, ses paroles dépassaient ce que chacun de ces enfants avait imaginé jamais de plus noble et de plus impérieux. Un bouillonnement étrange agitait leurs cerveaux, et une rumeur presque insurrectionnelle emplissait leur préau, leur quartier, leur réfectoire, et même leur dortoir : car, pour les mépriser, ils comparaient à ce grand homme ses collègues et l'administration. Ce bâtiment d'ordinaire si morne semblait une écurie où l'on a distribué de l'avoine (Œuvre III, p.11).

There are two main points to note here. First, the narrator injects large amounts of sentiment into this passage, amplifying it as he goes on, piling up aspects of the boys' reaction to their new teacher. His manner causes the narrator to list his attractions one after another, 'son aspect, le son de sa voix, ses paroles', as he follows the boys' appreciation of this new teacher. This quasi-hyperbolic description is echoed in the boys' reaction as a rumour circulates around 'leur préau, leur quartier, leur réfectoire, et même leur dortoir'. The narrator uses the image of their brains bubbling in reaction to Bouteiller and this physical response is compounded by the simile he employs at the end of the paragraph, comparing the school to a stable of horses who have just been given their oats. This is a passionate, physical reaction which the narrator emphasises. The other aspect of this opening passage which is worth noting is the way the pupils act and react as a group. There are no individuals in the paragraph: it is the whole class which is violently moved, his words are beyond the imaginings of every child, it is their playground, refectory and dormitory where the rumour circulates. These boys are acting as one single unit, their brains and bodies reacting in unison to Bouteiller. It is clear, therefore, where the power lies in this

paragraph. The grammatical and metaphorical focus of the paragraph is Bouteiller, and the boys' gaze is firmly set on him and they act in reaction to him. This opening paragraph sets the tone for the pupils' admiration of their teacher.

The dynamic that the narrator constructs between Bouteiller and his pupils, that of dominance by an individual over a group, is dependent on the philosophical viewpoint of the teacher. Bouteiller's mission is

de les fixer. Kantien déterminé, il leur donna la vérité après son maître. Le monde n'est qu'une cire à laquelle notre esprit comme un cachet impose son empreinte... Notre esprit perçoit le monde sous les catégories d'espace, de temps, de causalité... Notre esprit dit : «Il y a de l'espace, du temps, des causes»; c'est le cachet qui se décrit lui-même. Nous ne pouvons pas vérifier si ces catégories correspondent à rien de réel. (Œuvre III, p.20)

Here the narrator endows Bouteiller with attitudes opposed to his own; the teacher is a follower of Kant, advocates reason without prejudice and seeks to remove any preconceived notions of legitimate cultural heritage from his pupils through presenting them with the notion of relativism. The presentation of the teacher's methods in such ideologically explicit terms which are in opposition to those views already expressed by the narrator firmly positions Bouteiller as the villain of the piece.<sup>17</sup> As Barrès strives to educate the reader in his views of positive collectivism, he creates a figure who seeks to promote the opposing political viewpoint and who is ultimately the agent of destruction for his pupils. Significantly, this ideological opposition is not communicated to the reader only in direct political rhetoric, as in the passage above, but is also translated in the

<sup>17</sup> Bouteiller is an ideological figure in *Les Déracinés*, but he was also based upon a real person, Auguste Burdeau, as Barrès makes explicit in *Les Déracinés* (see Œuvre III, p.24). I have chosen to concentrate on the symbolic aspect of Bouteiller in this chapter, as I will be addressing Barrès's process of fictonalising historical characters in the following chapter. Burdeau was Barrès's teacher who later, as Bouteiller does, became involved in politics. He was elected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1885, 1889 and 1893 and became Finance Minister in 1893. For more detail on the Bouteiller-Burdeau relationship see Maurice Davanture, 'Barrès, Burdeau et Bouteiller' in *Maurice Barrès, Actes du colloque organisé par la Faculté des lettres et des sciences humaines de Nancy, Annales de l'Est* (Nancy, 1963).

text into comments the narrator directs towards the reader about Bouteiller as an educator: 'Mais voilà une aspects les plus intéressants de l'œuvre de M.Bouteiller au lycée de Nancy: il fait avec ampleur son geste de semeur et ignore absolument ce que devient la graine' (p.23). It is clear from the first chapter onwards why Bouteiller teaches in this way. He too 'est un produit pédagogique, un fils de la raison, étranger à nos habitudes traditionnelles, locales ou de famille, tout abstrait, et vraiment suspendu dans le vide.' He is simply part of a larger system, which operates to uproot pupils from their regional identity.

Bouteiller is not solely a mouthpiece of Kantian politics, but is also an important character in terms of the forward movement of the plot. It is the process of *déracinement*, instigated by Bouteiller but inherent in the system which he represents, which leads to the self-destruction of some of his pupils. The narrator forewarns the reader of the impending doom of some of the young men in the opening chapter: 'Ces trop jeunes destructeurs de soi-même aspirent à délivrer de leur vraie nature, à se déraciner' (p.36). It is clear that all is not going to end well, and the road they are guided towards leads Racadot and Moucefrin to murder. As we have seen, it is Bouteiller's instruction which inspires Sturel, Racadot and the others to leave Lorraine for Paris and enter into the world of political writing, but he also appears later in the novel, climbing the political ladder in Paris. Bouteiller is involved in many dubious political scandals, such as Panama and the Wilson Affair, as he goes to work for the Jewish banker Jacques de Reinach, an infamous figure embroiled in the political intrigue of the Third Republic. His continuing presence in the text, as he interacts with real characters and historical events, only deepens the reader's



distrust of him, contaminating him further. Ultimately, Bouteiller is not just guilty of promoting ideology which conflicts with that of the narrator, but of his involvement in dubious political activity.<sup>18</sup>

Barrès's depiction of the teacher is as a product of a system that uproots its pupils and acts irresponsibly towards them. He is representative of the system and indicative of its corrupting power. Bouteiller is one of a line of fictional teachers, including Phillotson and Sixte, who mislead their pupils. This lack of good instruction leads only to self-destruction and ruin. The narrator's continual intervention into the narrative to pass judgement on and question Bouteiller serves to make the reader constantly aware of the corrupting influence of the teacher and the miserable consequences it has for his pupils.

The teacher character in *Bas les cœurs!* is similarly used in a representative way. Again, we have a figure that is endowed with traits which the author sees as having corrupting influence over the young. However, these characteristics are very different to those of Bouteiller. This is perhaps unsurprising, due to the opposing nature of Barrès's and Darien's ideological standpoints. Jean Barbier's teacher, M. Beaudrain, is a friend of his father and is a member of the group of bourgeois men portrayed in the novel as hypocrites and false patriots.<sup>19</sup> Again, the teacher is present from the very outset of the

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<sup>18</sup> This process of degeneration through misleading instruction is present in many other novels of the day, such as Bourget's *Le Disciple* (1889) in which Robert Greslou, the 'disciple' of a writer called Sixte, is arrested for killing a girl. Indeed, Barrès dedicated *Les Déracinés* to Bourget, who had long been a friend and mentor to him. Another version of this process can be observed in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1895) as the teacher Mr. Phillotson falsely raises Jude's academic sights to Christminster, only for Jude's story to end in failure and terrible tragedy. Another parallel between the characters of Bouteiller and Phillotson is their failure to follow through in their instruction once their pupils leave school and come to ask for their help: Phillotson proceeds to marry the woman Jude loves and is a factor in their misery, while Bouteiller refuses to help Moucheffrin and Racadot with their financial difficulties, which leads them to turn to crime.

<sup>19</sup> David Bosc asserts that Darien's portrayal of this group of middle class men in *Bas les cœurs!* is one in a series of portrayals of the bourgeoisie as a homogenous group who are identified by

novel. Whereas Bouteiller is the representative of relativist, Kantian ideology in Barrès's text, Beaudrain is another part of the bourgeois hypocrisy that Jean is witness to. The reader is made aware of this by Jean's narration of Beaudrain's seemingly fierce support of Napoleonic ideals and the need for France to go to war to avenge earlier defeats: 'Napoléon n'a pas été battu. Il a été trahi, a fait M.Beudrain en hochant la tête d'un air sombre. [...] c'était un bien grand capitaine que César! Eh! eh! nous suivons ses traces. Seulement nous n'aurons pas de besoin de perdre trois jours, comme lui, à jeter un pont sur le Rhine; nous irons un peu plus vite, eh! eh!' (Voleurs, p.181). In this, the reader's first encounter with Beaudrain, Darien intercuts his support of the war and his belief in the returning glory of France with Jean's discussion of his homework. Jean makes the reader aware not only of the teacher's pseudo-patriotic rhetoric, but also of his limited capabilities as a teacher. Jean is supposed to be doing a piece of translation, but: 'je copie tout simplement mes versions, depuis deux mois, sur une traduction des *Commentaires* que j'ai achetée dix sous au bouquiniste de la rue Royale. Les jours pairs, je glisse traîtreusement un tout petit contresens dans le texte irréprochable; les jours impairs, j'y introduis un non-sens. Hier, c'était le 17' (Voleurs, p.162). Not only are Beaudrain's political views without foundation, but he is being duped by a twelve-year-old boy; the teacher in this story is a miserable figure of fun from the very beginning. While this establishes Beaudrain's limited insight into his pupil, it also undermines the legitimacy of his political views.

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their opposition to the 'peuple' and their love of money. Other Darien novels he links with this theme are *Biribi*, *Le Voleur* and *Les Pharisiens*. While there is an identifiable link between Darien's portrayal of Randal's father in *Le Voleur* and M. Barbier, I would argue the men of *Bas les cœurs!* are typified rather than homogenised. The purposely shallow depiction of such characters, as they speak in nationalist or political cliché or rhetoric and communicate in polite exchanges, makes them representatives of their class.

This weakening of Beudrain as a figure of authority is compounded later in the novel as Jean relates his observations of the collapse of the Empire and the declaration of the Republic. Beudrain's Napoleonic zeal dissolves. He, along with others such as M. Barbier, begins to find excuses to accept the new regime as easily as the old one. Their loyalties seem to change as easily as the trappings of support for each regime: 'Nous sommes en République, et ça se voit: on a enlevé l'aigle du drapeau de la mairie et on l'a remplacé par un fer de lance; on a effacé le mot *Impérial* du fronton des édifices et on appelle l'Empereur « Badinguet ».' When le père Merlin, Jean's elderly neighbour, questions this, Beudrain is bemused: '—Ce M. Merlin est étonnant, fait M. Beudrain quand le vieux a disparu. Il n'est jamais content' (Voleurs, p.226). While Bouteiller's political views are full of rhetoric and explicit in their exposition and execution, Beudrain is representative of that which Darien abhorred: the shallow hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie. In the above scene, Beudrain cannot see the regime change in a profound way, but instead is only capable of recognising the symbols of change. He takes the decorations which signify change as the change itself, and therefore the meaning of the political developments are shown to be beyond him. His view is limited to his surroundings and his focus is on his own well-being. This aspect of Beudrain's character is brought into sharp focus by Darien as he contrasts the teacher with Merlin: '[c]e M. Merlin est étonnant [...] Il n'est jamais content.'

Another important difference concerning the relationship between teacher and pupil as portrayed by Barrès and Darien is the ability of the pupils to see through their teachers while they are still young. The young men of *Les Déracinés* clearly could not perceive the effect Bouteiller's influence was

having on them until much damage had already been caused. Jean, however, is much more knowing and this comes through in the narration from the outset, as Jean dupes his teacher. An incident which more clearly demonstrates Beaudrain's inability to comprehend events in a profound way is the death of Catherine's brother. When she receives a letter to say her brother has been killed in the war, the incident is transformed by Beaudrain, M. Barbier and others from a family tragedy to firstly a political debate and then the teacher proceeds to give his opinion:

-Avez-vous remarqué le style de la lettre? demande tout bas M.Beaudrain à mon père. Comme c'est simple, mais comme c'est empoignant ! Rien, absolument rien, au point de vue de la syntaxe, naturellement, mais une émotion qui déborde. Et ce passage sur les récoltes ! cette antithèse entre les ruines que fait la guerre et les dons généreux de Cérés! C'est d'une simplicité... rustique... Pas une expression triviale, d'ailleurs, pas une expression basse: les récoltes! Ah ! le terme est choisi de main de maître, fait le professeur en secouant la tête. Heureusement qu'il n'a pas vu les *cochons gras*! [emphasis author's own] (Voleurs, p.239).

Not only does this incident demonstrate Beaudrain's lack of sympathy and sensitivity, but it also reinforces the picture Darien is building of a man without depth of insight or capable of profound understanding. The letter itself, written by Catherine's father, also appears in the text and mentions Gregory's death alongside the fact that they have two pigs to sell. In this scene, Jean sees through his teacher's posturing and declarations. Just as in the scene of the change of flags and signs in reaction to the change of regime, so the gaze of the reader follows that of the young boy, and we perceive his teacher to be concerned not with the reality of the events, but rather with the style of their description. As the shallow nature of his character is revealed to the reader by his pupil, the power dynamic between the two is in favour of the young boy. Beaudrain is incapable of influencing Jean in the way Bouteiller holds sway over his pupils.

The teacher-pupil balance of power shifts further as the text develops. During the opening stages of the text, Beaudrain is very present in the text.

However, as the narrative progresses, and his character is revealed as a hypocrite and a coward, Jean's awareness of the weakness of his teacher builds. In contrast to his earlier nationalist posturing, as the reality of war enters Versailles in the form of Prussian occupation, Beaudrain becomes increasingly afraid and Jean is well aware it: 'Il y a quelque temps déjà que nous n'avons vu M.Beaudrain. Nous savons qu'il est malade. Malade de peur. [...] lorsque le canon français, se rapprochant, semblait toucher aux portes de Versailles, il a été pris d'une crise de nerfs' (p.278). Beaudrain is gradually removed from Jean and consequently from the text. The conflict of power between teacher and pupil is finally revealed as Beaudrain's miserable state makes his pupil feel sorry for him: 'Nous trouvons le professeur en train de faire ses malles. Il nous explique qu'il se hâte, car il a peur que les Allemands se ravisent et lui enlèvent son sauf-conduit. M.Beaudrain me fait pitié; ce n'est plus que l'ombre de lui-même' (p.279).

During the course of the novel, therefore, Beaudrain's true character is gradually revealed. At the beginning of the story, he is another one of the townsmen: 'M.Beaudrain a l'air d'un croque-mort. Ils sont tous comme lui, les gens qui habitent Versailles: drôles comme des enterrements' (p.191). He is another factor in Jean's frustration and boredom with Versailles. However, as the narrative rolls on, the war begins and the outside world enters the little middle class world in the form of the Prussian army, so Beaudrain's politics and patriotism are shown to be without foundation. He is a hypocrite, like Jean's father, but more ridiculous because of his pomposity and more miserable because of his fear. The portrait of Beaudrain is all the more pathetic because it is delivered to us by his pupil.

Bouteiller and Beaudrain achieve different levels of influence over their pupils, and they have different ambitions, but they are both characters who are representative of those qualities of the middle class of which Barrès and Darien were most critical. Bouteiller is set up as a type of anti-Barrès: while Barrès is attempting to educate the reader to correctly assess the weaknesses of the Third Republic, Bouteiller is presented as an agent of destruction and *déracinement*, representative of that which Barrès sought to critique. Darien's approach to M. Beaudrain also sees his narrator challenge the validity and effectiveness of the teacher's educative influence on his pupil. Beaudrain is not vilified, however, in the same way as Bouteiller; instead he is mocked and dismissed as another example of the duplicity, hypocrisy and cowardice which Darien believed characterised the Third Republic. While Barrès is explicit in his attempt to establish the narrator as the positive educator in the text, Darien seeks to identify with the pupil through ridiculing his teacher.

### **Mentors**

The role of these teachers in *Bas les cœurs!* and *Les Déracinés* is to provide the reader with figures who represent those forces which provoke feelings of isolation in the young boys. Bouteiller is the representative of relativism and uprooting from family and home, while Beaudrain acts as another figure in Jean's life who elicits disdain from him. This isolation, whether it is extreme or not, makes the young characters turn to people outside of the home and outside of the school for instruction and guidance. In both of these texts, such figures are represented by older men who are not related to the young characters and who are, in some sense, opposed to the boys' parents. Jean Barbier turns to his

neighbour, le père Merlin, for guidance and understanding, while the young *lorrains* in Paris seek instruction from Taine. All are men who have no formal authority over the boys, yet they all perform a mentor-like function, inspiring the young men and opening their eyes to other points of view. However, it must be said that each has varying levels of influence on the young characters and each is portrayed in a different light, ranging from the voice of reason in the novel to another contributor to the boys' corruption.

For Darien, le père Merlin is representative of the critic of bourgeois society, the individual. In *Bas les cœurs!* he is perhaps the mentor-figure most in opposition to the authority of the home. He is, in practically every way, a contrast to Jean's father. As we know, the father is the typified villain, the 'bon bourgeois', and the teacher he provides for his son also forms part of this class. Merlin, whose symbolic name reflects his position as the force for good in the text, is at odds with the bourgeois society he sees around him. He has strong political opinions, but is tolerated in the town: 'on continue à le fréquenter, à lui faire bon visage, malgré ça, malgré ses opinions ultra-républicaines qu'il affiche très ouvertement. Il a de si belles fleurs!' (*Voleurs*, p.193). Such comments by the narrator reveal Jean's recognition of the mutual uncomfortable tolerance which makes the politeness of the provincial middle class amusing. Merlin's politics are sincere and unflinching, in contrast with many other of the townspeople including Jean's father, and he is presented to the reader as the voice of reason, the sympathetic, authentic character amongst so much hypocrisy. The scene when a group of the townspeople, including M. Barbier and Merlin, are watching the punishment of a Prussian soldier demonstrates the

difficult relationship which exists between Merlin and other people in Versailles:

‘-Sapristi! dit mon père, quelle obéissance! qu’elle soumission! cinquante coups de pieds au derrière ! Le père Merlin veut fermer la fenêtre. –Oh! attendons la fin, implore ma sœur, émerveillée. Le père Merlin lui jette un regard étrange. Puis il pousse la croisée et tourne l’espagnolette. –Vous trouves donc ce spectacle bien intéressant, mademoiselle? –Oh! c’est si amusant. Ce qui doit être bien drôle aussi, c’est la figure du soldat. Quel dommage qu’on ne puisse pas la voir! –Eh! eh! si Frédéric II vivait encore! dit M .Beudrain. O grand homme! s’écrie-t-il tragiquement, tu peux sortir de ton tombeau, tes enfants sont dignes de toi! –Qu’est-ce vous prend? demande le père Merlin avec intérêt. Êtes-vous malade, monsieur Beudrain?’ (Voleurs, p.261).

Through the juxtaposition of the contrasting perceptions of this event by these four characters, Darien subtly places the reader’s sympathy with Merlin. Jean’s father admires the discipline, his sister finds the spectacle amusing, while Beudrain finds an opportunity to make reference to Frederic II. Intersecting all of these expressions of enjoyment of the punishment are the simple actions and comments of Merlin. Jean’s gaze shifts from one character to the next, always returning to see the reaction of Merlin. In this scene, he is the gauge by which Jean judges the validity and appropriateness of each reaction.

He observes Merlin as the opposition to the hypocrisy of his family and his teacher. Merlin’s radical politics are made explicit in the text. Most of chapter 20 of the novel is taken up with a discussion between Jean and his elderly mentor after a particularly fierce argument between the boy and his father. It is an important development in the relationship between Merlin and Jean. The boy decides to tell all he has seen to the old man, including his father’s business with the Prussians and his grandfather’s mistreatment of his aunt for money. He describes honestly all the hypocrisy and betrayal he has observed in his family. The result is the forging of an alliance between the two: ‘A qui voulez-vous que je parle? A mon père? Il ne m’écoute pas ou ne me répond pas. A mon sœur? Elle se moque de moi. Le vieux hausse les épaules. –



Eh bien! tu me parleras, à moi. Et si tu manques de courage, je t'en donnerai.' (p.293) This emotional bond leads to an ideological one: Merlin then goes on to give an extended speech on the false nature of patriotism, and Jean is convinced. The genuine, authentic relationship which develops between Merlin and Jean is used by Darien to bolster the legitimacy of the anti-capitalist, anti-nationalist views which he airs through the old neighbour. Indeed, the authenticity of this relationship is essential to the successful promotion of any political programme in this novel. Jean is isolated from his family and his teacher through his own awareness of their insincerity and duplicity. In order to successfully communicate his beliefs through Merlin, the relationship between the boy and his neighbour must be genuine, believable and sincere.

Not only is Merlin the political antithesis of Jean's family and his teacher, but he is set up as the opposing source of authority to them. He listens to Jean when his family do not, he tells Jean the truth when his father will not, he instructs Jean in lessons he wants to learn when M. Beaudrain cannot. This role of confidant develops into that of tutor. Jean soon visits the old man daily, which does not seem to bother his family. Jean believes they are grateful for his absence and happy to save money in tutoring: 'il me donne des leçons, «pour m'entretenir la main», dit-il. Le fait est que j'apprends beaucoup avec lui – beaucoup plus qu'avec M. Beaudrain.' Therefore, Merlin is not only a listening ear to Jean, but he is also a sort of substitute teacher. He is presented by Jean to the reader as a true teacher, instructing his young pupil about the realities of life: 'L'autre jour, j'ai appris, par hasard, une chose que je voulais savoir depuis longtemps. J'ai appris ce que c'est que le concubinage' (p.296). It is not simply Jean as a young boy who looks up to Merlin, but the old man also seems to take

their friendship seriously. He comes to tell Jean's father that the boy should be sent away to school to Paris. It is Merlin that explains the situation to Jean: 'Tu travailleras. Le travail fait passer le temps... fait passer bien des choses. Tu grandiras vite; et, plus tard, ma foi... plus tard, comme je n'ai pas d'enfant... comme j'ai eu le malheur de perdre mes enfants... eh! bien, nous verrons... je serai toujours là, tu sais.' (p.306) Therefore, Merlin is established as the source of an authentic emotional connection for Jean. The simplicity of his words in this passage demonstrates the authenticity of their friendship, upon which is based the legitimacy of the political discussion which occurs between the two.

Merlin's role as the mentor who challenges the authority of the parent culminates at the end of the novel. The concluding passage of the text encapsulates the transference of Jean's loyalty to Merlin and his political convictions, as the boy, his father and Merlin watch Thiers pass in a coach:

-Salut, mon enfant, c'est la Patrie qui passe!... Vive Thiers! Vive Thiers! Moi, je connais Thiers. Je sais ce qu'il a été. Je sais ce qu'il est. Je ne saluerai pas. La voiture est déjà passé, et je n'ai pas salué, je n'ai pas mis le doigt à mon chapeau. Mon père se tourne vers moi. -Pourquoi n'as-tu pas salué? Je ne réponds pas. Il lève la main. Qu'il frappe. Mais le père Merlin a vu venir le coup. Il se place rapidement entre mon père et moi et, souriant: -Décidément, Barbier [...], je dois avouer que vous aviez raison tout à l'heure: vous êtes un bon bourgeois (Voleurs, p.316).

Here we have the political differences between Barbier and Merlin, as well as the conflict over Jean, played out in one scene. Merlin steps between father and son, saving Jean from the fist of his father. It is also significant that Jean speaks of his own convictions with much more certainty than before: 'Je *sais* ce qu'il a été.' [my italics] Through Jean's discussions with Merlin, he has rejected the new bourgeois Republic which Thiers represents. The final phrase of the novel (a disdainful comment aimed at M. Barbier) signals the culmination of a process which has been occurring throughout the latter stages of the text. As the narration has been a complicit experience shared by Jean and the reader, sharing

humour and isolation, this scene signals the entry of Merlin into this intimacy. The inclusion by Darien of the mocking humour of Merlin demonstrates his sympathy with Jean and the sincere bond which has formed between them. It also demonstrates the link which has been formed between Merlin and the reader as we too now sympathise and laugh along with the old man.

Merlin is, therefore, a mentor who is in opposition to other figures of authority in the text and who is also in a reciprocal friendship with the boy. He is not some distant figure, such as Sixte in Bourget's *Le Disciple*, whose communication is only revealed by letter. He is actively involved in the boy's life. He is the voice of reason and truth in the novel, who guides Jean and crystallises his rebellion against his father; he provides the instruction which Jean's father and teacher do not. Jean turns to Merlin, the outcast individual, to find sincerity and truth in contrast to the hollowness of family relationships and the hypocrisy of nationalism. Just as Froissard confides in the reader in *Biribi* in the hope of finding empathy, so Jean turns to Merlin.

The mentor plays a very different role in *Les Déracinés*. Barrès wished to point out the short-comings of such figures and undermine them. Indeed, Bouteiller himself could be said to be a type of mentor; his influence extends far beyond the classroom and his corrupting force continues into the adulthood of the young men. There are other older men in the text who could also be seen as mentors; however, they are not involved with the boys in the same way as Merlin was with Jean. The young men in this text look to literary or political figures such as Rousseau, Hugo, Taine and Napoleon for their inspiration.

Rather than a portrayal of close relational bonds which are formed in opposition to the authority of the teacher and home, such distant mentors are not

representative of genuine emotion, but rather are symbolic figures. One such figure is Hippolyte Taine. After publishing a study of the philosopher in *La Vraie République*, Roemerspacher has an interview with Taine and this conversation is delivered to the reader in its entirety in chapter seven, entitled 'L'Arbre de M. Taine'. The mentor figure here is, of course, a real person translated into the text as a symbol of his own philosophical theories. The tree which features in the chapter's title is one which Taine visits every day on his walk. This tree serves as a symbol of Taine's belief in the fundamental unity of humanity. In Barrès's earlier works, philosophers and writers had also been used as mentor figures, or 'maîtres' as Barrès calls them. However, the insertion of such figures into the earlier texts occurred through the inclusion of large passages of dense contemplations of their works.<sup>20</sup> In this text, Barrès develops this method by having Taine physically present in the text, interacting with the other characters.

However, this physical presence of the 'maître' figure in this text still does not achieve the same level of authenticity of character as we saw in Merlin. Much of the conversation between the young man and Taine is taken up with weighty discussion, enabling Barrès to insert sections of text which resemble an essay rather than fiction. Even the description of Taine and his tree are endowed with nobility and dignity:

Ils étaient arrivés devant le square des Invalides ; M. Taine s'arrêta, mit ses lunettes et, de son honnête parapluie, il indiquait au jeune homme un arbre assez vigoureux, un platane, exactement celui qui se trouve dans la pelouse à la hauteur du trentième barreau de la grille compté depuis l'esplanade. Oui, de son parapluie mal roulé de bourgeois négligent, il désignait le bel être luisant de pluie, inondé de lumière par les destins alternés d'une dernière journée d'avril (Œuvre III, p.158).

<sup>20</sup> For example, in *Un Homme libre*, published in 1889 as the second part of the *Culte du moi* trilogy, the protagonist imposes a strict isolation upon himself, involving meditation on such thinkers as Saint-Simon. In order to achieve this in the narration, Barrès included large sermon-like sections of discussion of his works.

This passage demonstrates the fictionalising process which occurs in the character of Taine. While the narrator injects a sense of reality and authenticity into the scene through the precision with which he pinpoints the tree, it is undeniable that both Taine and his tree are romanticised here. Taine is endowed with the air of an honest bourgeois man while the vigorous tree is transformed into a 'bel être luisant de pluie, inondé de lumière'. The reader is presented with a stylised image of Taine which is symbolic rather than individualised.

The reaction of Rœmerspacher to Taine also provides us with a useful point of contrast with the Jean-Merlin relationship. After his interview, the young man has feelings of elation: 'D'avoir approché, à côté de M. Taine, en union avec M. Taine, et d'un cœur modeste mais ému, les problèmes de l'universel et de l'unité, Rœmerspacher éprouve un contentement joyeux et d'une qualité apaisante et religieuse' (p.155). This has been an experiential episode for Rœmerspacher rather than the forging of a deep friendship. The reference to religious contentment chimes in with the distance present between the mentor and the young man: Taine is to be revered and respected. This is a typical reaction of the young men to those who inspire them. There is a sense of reverence and distance between the boys and their mentors. Rather than construct a sustained relationship between the young men and their mentors, Barrès's method was to create symbolic figures that perform an inspirational function in the text.

This attitude of the young characters gets mixed in with the narrator's own philosophical musings on the subject to produce a narrative which is often abstract and theoretical. For example, when the group meet together at Napoleon's tomb, the narrative reaches quasi-religious fervour: 'Le tombeau de

l'Empereur, pour des Français de vingt ans, ce n'est point le lieu de la paix, le philosophie fossé où un pauvre corps qui s'est tant agité se défait; c'est le carrefour de toutes les énergies qu'on nomme audace, volonté, appétit' (p.165). While Taine symbolised the logic of organic collectivity, Napoleon is the figure who represents for Barrès the importance of energy. The quasi-mystical image of the grave as the crossroads of audacity, determination and appetite returns the reader to the significance of *la terre*, the symbolic source of energy and the roots from which the young men have been torn.

Barrès's symbolic mentors perform an essential role, therefore, not only in inspiring the young *bacheliers*, but also in voicing elements of Barrès's own political and metaphysical concerns. While Darien used Merlin as his spokesperson in the novel through establishing an authentic, believable relationship between Jean and the old man, Barrès sought to depict stylised, inspirational portrayals of real people transformed into characters with symbolic weight. Through depicting the influence and authority of teachers and mentor figures over Jean and the *lorrains*, Darien and Barrès both removed the education process out of the hands of the parents, reflecting the socialisation process of the adolescent. This process also allows each author to depict the failings of the middle-class teacher while attempting to compensate for such failings with other characters, outside of the authority of the home and school, who supply the guidance the young men lack. Indeed, the contrasting methods of the portrayal of this guidance reveals a significant comparison between the methods of Darien and Barrès as they both strove to engage with their reader.

While Barrès sought to inspire and instruct us through didactic argument, political discussion and stylised visions of his mentor figures, Darien sought to

connect with us on an emotional level, creating sympathetic characters who are aware of the hypocrisy which surrounds them. In doing so, Darien is a more subtle educator of his reader as the narrator seeks to provoke the reader to respond to the political issues Darien is raising in this text through this emotional connection.

It is this conflict with authority which also causes each narrator to portray teachers in a negative light. The teachers we meet in these texts, Bouteiller and Beaudrain, are both marked with the traits of the Third Republic of which the authors are critical: Bouteiller separates his pupils from their cultural heritage; Beaudrain is hypocritical, shallow and cowardly. Even though the conditions in which each boy is educated are different, the criticism of the formal education process, as embodied by these men, remains. Indeed, the only instruction which is appreciated by the narrators comes from figures that are not approved by the sources of authority, the home and state. The mentor figure in *Bas les cœurs!* is an older man who is set up as an anti-authority character. Merlin teaches the boy in a truthful and genuine way and attempts to open his eyes to the faults in the education he is receiving from approved sources, including his family. The mentor figures in *Les Déracinés* do not operate in the same way. Indeed, because they are literary and historical figures, they do not have the same relationship with the boys as Merlin has with Jean, but are symbolic figures who seek to inspire the boys to look beyond their education and think for themselves.

These depictions of young men who are disillusioned with the education they have received are not solely stories of rebellion or isolation; neither are they are simply disillusioned versions of the *roman de l'apprentissage*. Instead,

they are texts which transform the tale of the young isolated man into essential elements of the political programmes of Barrès and Darien. Indeed, the neglected, isolated figure of Jean Barbier, the young man mistreated and at odds with his family, is a character who returns under many guises in the work of Georges Darien. The conflict of authority embodied in the education of this young man is an essential part of Darien's depiction of the struggle of the individual to retain their independence of mind and will. The rejection of the bourgeois education is an echo of the abhorrence of the regimented, institutionalised training of people, which he depicted in *Biribi*. In his later work, *La Belle France* (1900), Darien explicitly addressed the issue of the education system: 'Le système d'instruction et d'éducation en vigueur en France est le plus mauvais du monde entier. Il est le plus mauvais parce qu'il est le plus tyrannique. Il n'a d'autre but que d'inculquer le respect de l'autorité' (*Voleurs*, p.1312). The system fails its pupils in true instruction and only seeks to reproduce the next generation of institutionalised supporters of the regime: 'La France a la haine de l'homme qui pense par lui-même, qui veut agir par lui-même, qui n'a pas ramassé ses idées dans la poubelle réglementaire' (p.1200). Education for Darien was not about schools and universities (he believed they only produced cannon fodder), but rather about helping to produce independence of mind.

The autonomy of the individual is at the forefront of *Bas les cœurs!*, as it is in *Biribi*. Taken together, Darien's first two novels are a damning portrait of the forces which sought to oppress the power of the individual to determine his or her own destiny. Both of these texts present the reader with characters who see through the hypocrisy of the Third Republic, the emptiness of family



relationships, the shallowness of national identity, and the bourgeoisie's love of money above all else. As the reader is included in the narrator's insights, we are comrades in the isolation experienced by both Jean Froissard and Jean Barbier. The camaraderie the reader feels for the narrator-characters of *Biribi* and *Bas les cœurs!* reveals a tension which is inherent in Darien's literary programme. In order to create effective and successful depictions of isolation and disillusionment, Darien appealed to his readers to identify with the isolated figures. Darien's political agenda, the necessity of the individual's self-expression and the right to autonomy and freedom from the restrictions of obligations to family and the state, required the author to connect with his readers through the use of pathos and humour. Ultimately, in order to promote individual freedom, it was necessary to appeal to others to recognise and sympathise with this. Writing and publishing may have been an act of rebellion in itself, but the pathos of *Bas les cœurs!* and the manner in which the narrator confides in the reader indicates that Darien also recognised the necessity of a connection with his readership.

Barrès's portrayal of an uprooted group of young men was not created to win his readers through pathos, but rather to instruct them in a fundamental part of his developing political agenda: his theories of the self and its connection to *le pays*. Through the *déracinement* of Sturel and the others, Barrès sought to demonstrate the nation's uprooting from their cultural and familial heritage. He believed the energy of France was at a low ebb. *Les Déracinés* is an attempt by Barrès to educate his readers to recognise the need in the nation of a collective sense of energy and a return to the importance of family and national identity. The issue of the education of the young remained important to Barrès as his

theories on national identity developed. As he explained in a later work, *Les Amitiés françaises* (1903), the child needs this sense of collectivity if he or she is to be properly educated: 'il faut d'abord que son imagination se forme en toute confiance auprès de ses parents. Une magnifique condition, c'est ensuite que le pays où il habite [...] devienne une influence. [...] l'orienter vers sa vérité, susciter en lui le sentiment d'un intérêt commun auquel chacun doit concourir' (*Œuvre V*, p.482).

Throughout the representation of the education of the young in these novels, there is a continual conflict between sources of authority and power and the individual's struggle for independence. The differences in the depiction of these sources and the influence they have on the young characters are generated from the different criticisms Darien and Barrès had of the education system. Darien thought formal education simply produced the next generation of soldiers, whereas Barrès believed children needed to be firmly rooted in their racial and cultural heritage. Each of these criticisms of the education system was embodied in the conflict between young men and their homes and schools. Education was essential to each author's literary and political agendas, and the use of the isolated figure of a young man seeking guidance is certainly a powerful anti-authority figure. These texts are representative of each author's project to educate his readers. Even though the narration of each story is from a different perspective, the aim of each is to give an account which reveals the truth (as the author sees it) to his readers. These texts not only portray the experiences of the young, but they also attempt to provoke the reader to question the legitimacy of the power and authority of social structures.

## Chapter Five

### Politics and Authority: *Leurs figures* and *Le Voleur*

One of the key features of the fiction of both Maurice Barrès and Georges Darien is the challenge to authority presented in different forms in their writing. Whether this challenge comes in the form of a protest against the education system through fiction (as seen in the previous chapter), a challenge to the legitimacy of parental authority in such fiction, or an undermining of the authority of those who are commercially successful (whether in the literary sphere or the field of commerce) through parody and irony, both Darien and Barrès used their literary skills to subvert and challenge various authority figures in their literature. The differences between the works of these two writers consist largely in those at whom they aimed these challenges, and the form and execution of these literary protests.

By the turn of the century, the contrast between the status of Barrès and that of Darien had grown increasingly stark. Darien's exile to England in 1894 following the 'lois scélérates' also led him into an exile from the literary world of Paris. It is perhaps this criminalisation of his political activities which is echoed in *Le Voleur*. In this text we see a shift from the child-narrator he had created in *Bas les cœurs!* and *L'Épaulette* to a text seen through the eyes of a thief who gets away with his crime.<sup>1</sup> Reflecting his own status as an ostracised writer, Darien created a narrator who presents the world of crime and corruption from the perspective not of an innocent observer, but rather through the eyes of a character who is himself a

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<sup>1</sup> Although *L'Épaulette* was not published until 1905, there is evidence to suggest that the text was actually planned much earlier, possibly as early as 1888, see Redfern, p.90.

criminal. In contrast, Barrès's status as a significant political writer of his generation was being established at this time. He had published the first two parts of his second major trilogy, *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale*, as well as publicly involving himself in the continuing scandal of the Dreyfus Affair. In *Leurs figures*, he addresses the fall of Boulangism, reassessing General Boulanger and the reasons for his failure to seize political power. This fictionalised version of historical events is achieved through the voice of a third-person narrator who speaks with the authority of hindsight and experience. Not only will these two fictional texts reveal to us the attitude of Barrès and Darien towards the authority of the State and the legitimacy of the electoral process in France; they will also expose how these writers saw their own status in relation to that authority.

For Darien, his challenge to the authority of the state and its agents took the form of vitriolic pages directed at those in authority who abused their position. In *Biribi* (1890), this is directed at the army officers; in *Bas les cœurs!* it is aimed at Jean Barbier's father and teacher. Indeed, it is often the case in Darien novels, as Walter Redfern has pointed out, that the older generation steals from or abuses the younger.<sup>2</sup> In *Le Voleur*, first published by Stock in 1897, there is a crooked uncle who swindles the young Randal (who later becomes the thief of the title) out of his inheritance. In many of Darien's novels, the reader finds deception, corruption and exploitation of the young by those in authority over them. By evoking pathos in the reader, Darien directs our sympathy towards the son, the pupil, the soldier and the prisoner. Through the use of first-person narration, punchy dialogue, humour and sincerity, Darien often portrayed the actions of those in authority as brutal and

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<sup>2</sup> Redfern, p.22.

unjust. In *Le Voleur*, however, we have a different scenario. The protagonist does not remain a victimised child, but becomes a thief. Randal is not a Robin Hood figure, but rather a thief who steals from the rich bourgeois families he encounters in order to line his own pockets. He is a literary figure who has more in common with gentlemen-thieves such as Arsène Lupin or Raffles, although Randal predates both of these famous crooks, or perhaps Jules Mary's popular creation, Roger-la-Honte, who appears in *Le Voleur* as a fellow thief.<sup>3</sup> The characterisation of Randal is very different to that of any of these more popular figures, however, as the ideological slant Darien gives to the narration focuses on the isolation of the thief from society and the challenge such a figure presents to wealthy bourgeois society. Can Darien defend the criminal? In this chapter I intend to assess the challenge to authority which is presented in *Le Voleur*. How was Darien able to elicit sympathy for the thief from the reader? Did the injection of a political message into his writing, which provides the purpose for Darien's fiction, affect the representation of the criminal?

Barrès's challenges to authority were of a very different nature. Whereas Darien used his journalism and pamphleteering to propose alternatives to the systems and institutions of which he was critical in his fiction,<sup>4</sup> Barrès consistently presented arguments for specific changes he believed should occur in institutions such as the education system in his fictional texts. His narrative style includes

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<sup>3</sup> Arsène Lupin first appeared in February 1905 in *Je sais tout*, after the editor requested Maurice Leblanc to create for the magazine an adventure which could capture some of the success *The Strand Magazine* was having with Sherlock Holmes during this period. Leblanc's first Lupin novel was *Arsène Lupin, gentleman-cambrioleur* which was published by Lafitte in 1907. Raffles, the creation of E.W. Hornung, first appeared in 'The Ides of March', in the June 1898 edition of *Cassell's Magazine*.

<sup>4</sup> For example, his 1899 anti-militarist pamphlet 'Can We Disarm?' published in collaboration with Joseph McCabe, and his promotion of the Single Tax theory in *La Belle France* (1900) and the *Revue de l'impôt unique*, which began in 1911.

sections of instruction to the reader; his aim in many of his novels was to educate the reader to recognise the validity of his political arguments, as we have seen in *L'Ennemi des lois* and *Les Déracinés*. His *Culte du moi* trilogy (1888-1891) demonstrated his belief in the necessity of social co-operation; his 'homme libre' did not succeed in living alone, isolated from the world. It could be argued that his second trilogy, *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale* (1897-1902), which includes the novel I will be concentrating on in this chapter, *Leurs figures* (1902), is again a set of novels which are intended to educate the reader in Barrès's own political beliefs which he combined with more metaphysical arguments, such as those based on Henri Bergson's theories on energy and vitality.<sup>5</sup> Whereas Darien's solution to the problems he diagnosed in society was action and ultimately revolution,<sup>6</sup> Barrès's method of social criticism was to integrate into his narrative metaphysical and philosophical arguments which he believed were integral to the organisation of society, through direct intervention by the author or the narrator. In *Leurs figures*, we have a very different novel to *Le Culte du moi* or even *Les Déracinés*. The course of real events, such as the Panama scandal and the rise and fall of Boulanger, enter much more into the narrative. Even though *Les Déracinés* was written with the specific period of 1879-1885 in mind (and these dates are made explicit throughout the text), the political events of this period play a lesser role in this first novel of the

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<sup>5</sup> Bergson's theories as expounded in his *Essais sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (1889) were increasingly popular in Parisian lecture halls at this time. His theories of the *élan vital* and of time and memory influenced Barrès's own ideas of collective and individual energy which he fictionalises in this trilogy.

<sup>6</sup> In particular, Darien outlined his criticisms of society as he saw it in *La Belle France*, a series of sometimes preachy, sometimes bitter assaults attacking social institutions such as the army, the Church and the press into which he injected his own political opinions based on anarchism, Georgism and championing the cause of the individual. He also wrote *La Belle France* during his stay in England, eventually finding a French publisher in 1900.

trilogy. This is perhaps because the characters themselves are younger and less involved in the political arena. *Les Déracinés* is also a novel in which Barrès used Sturel, Rœmerspacher and the others as representatives of their generation and of Lorraine, and positive and negative examples to the reader, rather than fully rounded characters. This is a novel which concentrates on the symbolic nature of their *déracinement*; when they are uprooted, it is symptomatic of the education of a generation, it is France which is 'dissociée et décérébrée' (Œuvre III, p.179). How does this symbolic and metaphysical style of narration and character construction alter in *Leurs figures*, the political climax of *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale*? Is the philosophical tension between the individual self and its responsibility towards society, which is privileged in *Le Culte du moi* and *Les Déracinés*, still in evidence in this novel, which places its characters more firmly into the 'real' world?

### **Representing the Real**

Even though Darien and Barrès approached the problem of the individual's relationship to society in very different styles and from very different political standpoints, they both encountered the same difficulty: that of representing the real. They tackled the converse sides of the same coin: Darien needed to make an imagined plot and characters appear real; Barrès needed to fictionalise real events and shape them into a coherent narrative. If the political message which drives the text is to be convincing, then the narrative must also be convincing as a representation of reality. Of course, as Hayden White concludes, this representation is always encoded, always a version of events, no matter how objective the writer

attempts to be. Even a list of facts has been chosen by someone and ordered in a certain way; historical investigation is a form of story-telling.<sup>7</sup> In the novel, this encoding can come in many forms, from the overarching structure of the plot down to the minute details of semantic manipulation of individual words and phrases. The process of mimesis in literature is not simply holding a mirror up to life, but rather creating an illusion of reality.<sup>8</sup> In *Le Voleur* and *Leurs figures*, the reader must be both compelled by the form of the narrative to read on and convinced by the coherence and similitude of the text as a representation of reality in order to accept the message, the version of reality, which the text is presenting. In the case of politically committed fiction, the version of events which are formed into the narrative must effectively convey the ideological message in a convincing manner. The formation of the narrative of *Leurs figures* and *Le Voleur* must successfully communicate this message to the reader through what Suleiman terms the 'injunction' between story and interpretation;<sup>9</sup> the reader's reception of the text is dependent on the relationship between the story and the interpretation of its message.

For Barrès, there was a need to create a powerful and authoritative narrator if the reader was to be convinced by his text. This need to create a trustworthy

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<sup>7</sup> As White writes in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p.21: 'We can comprehend the appeal of historical discourse by recognising the extent to which it makes the real desirable, makes the real into an object of desire, and does so by its imposition, upon events that are expressed as real, of the formal coherency that stories possess.'

<sup>8</sup> As Armine Kotin Mortimer writes: 'The notion of mimesis as a copy or image of a reality external to the book cannot sustain critical inquiry. Instead, mimesis *expresses* reality, involving the reader's participation in this *creation*. Realism is not a relation to the real, but to the writing of the real, a composition of reality.' Armine Kotin Mortimer, *Writing Realism: Representations in French Fiction* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), p.5.

<sup>9</sup> Suleiman, p.33-37.



authorial voice reflects the image Barrès projected of himself as a writer and a politician. Even when he had connections with anarchism early in his career, he still managed to maintain a sense of legitimacy. His brush with bohemia and anarchism, combined with his bourgeois background and manners, made for a mixture of the polite and the radical. He was well-mannered and dressed smartly, yet during the mid to late 1880s, when he was writing his collection of essays entitled *Le Quartier Latin: ces messieurs – ces dames* (1888), he associated with untidy bohemians and as well as young right-wing political writers such as Charles Maurras, and frequented beer halls and cafés, in the same way as some of his young *lorrains* of *Les Déracinés*.<sup>10</sup> While networking in the prestigious salons of the Champs-Élysées and the rue de Rome, Barrès was also gaining the approval of significant literary figures like Mallarmé through his articles in *Les Taches d'encre* (1884-5) and then his *Culte du moi* trilogy (1888-91).<sup>11</sup> By 1889, the influence of the ideas he promoted in these works on the likes of Maurras is clear from articles written in his praise such as that published in *L'Observateur français* in July of that year, entitled 'Le Dieu nouveau' in response to *Un Homme libre*: 'Voici que vient d'éclorre un culte original, absolument approprié à notre fin de siècle, un culte neuf prêché par un jeune poète au nom d'un dieu presque nouveau. Ce Dieu c'est le Moi. Ce culte c'est

<sup>10</sup> This combination of bourgeois and bohemian is most evident in Sturel. Moucheffrin and Racadot, who murder Astiné Aravain, do not have Sturel's refined behaviour and they come from humbler homes. See especially *Les Déracinés*, chapters 2 and 6.

<sup>11</sup> In *Maîtres et témoins de ma vie d'esprit*, published in 1954, Maurras recounted an incident which affected him as a young man. He and Barrès were walking together through the streets of the *quartier latin* when Barrès stepped aside to give up the pavement to a passing ordinary woman. Maurras saw this as an example of pride and delicacy which showed up his own brutality. For a more detailed explanation of Barrès's effect on Maurras and his combination of bourgeois and bohemian, see Jerrold Seigel, *Bohemian Paris: Culture, Politics, and the Boundaries of Bourgeois Life, 1830 – 1930* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp.281-288.

l'égotisme. Ce prophète n'est autre que Maurice Barrès.'<sup>12</sup> Barrès was clearly operating in the overlap between two spheres of the literary world at this early point in his career, cultivating influence among some of the younger avant-garde writers of the *quartier latin* and currying favour with the wealthy and influential members of certain salons. It was at this point in his career that he formally entered the political arena, winning a seat in the Chamber of Deputies in the 1889 elections as a Boulangist candidate for Nancy.

Again, this could be argued to be an example of Barrès operating within the overlap between radicalism and respectability. Boulangism has been assessed as a focus for opposition to the government which attracted all kinds of voters. Boulanger was not some sort of new Napoleon, a strong military figure rising to take over the running of the country, but he was rather a figure around whom malcontents and protest voters gathered, from socialists to anti-Semites to imperialists. The key feature of Boulangism in the context of the political manoeuvring of the Third Republic is its failure. Retrospectively, during the 1930s and 1940s this failure to sustain any political power or authority was attributed to the indecision of the General himself.<sup>13</sup> Frederic Seagur, however, revised this view to create an image of Boulangism as a focus for discontent rather than a radical, political force bent on revolution which only failed at the last hurdle. Indeed, in his opinion, Boulangism's

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<sup>12</sup> As quoted by Éric Roussel in his preface to Maurice Barrès, *Romans et Voyages: Le Culte du moi; L'Ennemi des lois; Du sang, du volupté et de la mort; Le Roman de l'énergie nationale* (Robert Laffont, 1994), p.xxxviii.

<sup>13</sup> For examples of this view, see D.W. Brogan, *The Development of Modern France* (London: Hamilton, 1940) and Adrien Dansette, *Le Boulangisme* (Fayard, 1946). The assessment of Boulangism at this time appears to have concluded that latent caesarism in the French population was ripe for a coup d'état, but the General's failure to follow this through in 1889 lost him the chance to gain power.

final goal was the 'establishment of a more democratic Republic'.<sup>14</sup> I agree with Seagur that this was the case; in his documented speeches and interviews, Boulanger concentrates on speaking of elections and constitutional reform. He denies any personal ambition.<sup>15</sup> Whether this was simple propaganda or not, it does not indicate any plans for a radical political take-over of the republican government; indeed, the Boulangist campaign was based on the need to strengthen the parliamentary system rather than undermine it. Barrès's involvement with Boulangism identified him as a significant political writer and activist. Unlike many anarchists who sought revolution in order to bring about effective political and social change, Barrès was willing to participate in established forms of government. His radicalism was restricted to the confines of the electoral system.

The theory behind such participation in the prescribed forms of political activity and dialogue, which remained a feature of much of Barrès's career, can be observed in his fiction at this time. The *Culte du moi* trilogy is an investigation into the idea of the individual coming to terms with life as a social being, and the relationship between this tension and the individual's participation in politics. As Jerrold Seigel concludes about Barrès's fiction at this time: 'the right kind of politics was a form of self-cultivation.'<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Barrès's Boulangist ideas are integral to his *Culte du moi* trilogy. Siegel argues that Barrès's involvement with Boulangism and the close relationship this had to his fiction at the time is an example of his 'self-

<sup>14</sup> Frederic Seagur, *The Boulanger Affair* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1969), p.254.

<sup>15</sup> See in particular his interview in *Le Cri du Peuple*, 18 April 1888 and an article by Charles Chincholle in *Le Figaro*, 9 July 1888, in which Boulanger is quoted extensively.

<sup>16</sup> Seigel, p.283.

conscious manipulation' of symbols to arouse the public to support Boulanger.<sup>17</sup>

These novels were not written in a radical form, nor did they challenge the literary models of the day. Using didactic argumentation and a structured narrative, Barrès constructed his fiction to include his political beliefs. Barrès's fiction and politics were linked, therefore, from the beginning of his literary and political activity, and in both spheres he was treading the line between the radical and the respectable.

It is this period that Barrès chose to portray in his second trilogy, *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale*. As we have seen, the first book, *Les Déracinés*, deals with the corruption of French youth through the education system and their *déracinement* from their home. The second part of the trilogy, *L'Appel au soldat*, is a more direct portrayal of contemporary events in the Parisian political scene of the late 1880s, as the lives of Sturel and Rœmerspacher are interwoven with the events of 1885 to 1891, when the General shot himself over the grave of his mistress. This is the novel of the rise and fall of Boulangism which mingles its promise and its failure with the lives and loves of the young men. The narrative explains the General's rise as a collective focus of national energy which parallels the lives of the young characters. The following passage demonstrates how Barrès connected together the lives of Sturel and the others with that of Boulanger and created an almost mythical image of the General:

En face du terme Élysée, habité par un vieux légiste incapable d'un mouvement venu du cœur qui seul toucherait les masses, le jeune ministre de la Guerre [Boulanger], chevauchant sur son cheval noir, disposé d'un éclat qui parle toujours à une nation guerrière; en outre, son autorité constitutionnelle, par tel grand mot, par tel acte qui va jusqu'à l'âme, il saurait bien la multiplier: il convoquerait nos réserves d'énergie. D'un tel élan, après une victoire, fût sorti un César. En mai 1887, le geste de la nation, ardemment tournée vers son Général, demeure demi-ébauché comme la conscience nationale de Rœmerspacher, comme l'héroïsme de Sturel, comme le réquisitoire de Bouteiller. (Œuvre III, p.407)

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<sup>17</sup> Seigel, p.288.

The image of the General on his black horse, Tunis, was one which was used extensively in the postcards and posters of the Boulangist campaign to create his persona of military power, honour and dignity. In 1887 Boulanger was actually fifty years old, but Barrès chose to depict him as a younger man. By juxtaposing this image of a young, dynamic powerful Boulanger with the old, out of touch establishment of the Élysée, Barrès endows the fictionalised Boulanger with the power to touch the hearts and minds of the people.<sup>18</sup> Through the use of clichéd rhetoric, such as 'un éclat qui parle toujours à une nation guerrière', the narrator seeks to vitalise Boulanger with Bergsonian energy which is able to touch the nation's soul. The reality of Boulanger's appearance, manner and ambitions was very different to the portrait Barrès paints of him here; such a passage as this smacks of myth-making.

The failure of Boulangism did not quench Barrès's fervour for the image of the General. Towards the end of the novel, Boulanger is painted as a tragic lover and a national hero who was unaware of the nation's love.<sup>19</sup> Again, this is a very different assessment of the man to that of many historians.<sup>20</sup> *L'Appel au soldat* is, therefore, similar to a piece of propaganda in its style and intentions. Barrès contributed to the myth of Boulanger as a potential leader of the nation; he used this piece of fiction to recreate Boulanger and present him as a symptom of the nation's

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<sup>18</sup> This image is very different to the one given by many historians of this period, including Seagur, who wrote of Boulanger: 'Boulanger himself was a mediocre personality; he was no Napoleon and still less a Hitler. It is doubtful that more than a small minority who voted for him were seeking a Boulangist empire.' Seagur, p.4.

<sup>19</sup> See in particular chapter 20, as the General mourns his mistress and his death is in turn lamented by his followers and the narrator.

<sup>20</sup> Seagur reminds us that by 1890 Boulangism's popularity and unity were on the wane as elections were lost and Boulanger's National Committee was disbanded, see pp. 242-3.

need for energy and leadership. Boulanger was no longer just a man, but rather a mythologised force which was a product of the nation's energy. Barrès's prefatory dedication of the novel to Jules Lemaitre makes this clear.

Le Boulangisme, c'est une construction spontanée que la malveillance d'un parti a jeté bas, tandis que les échafaudages empêchaient encore de saisir l'idée d'ensemble. S'il faut aimer les personnages de cette convulsion nationale, c'est une question secondaire et même ce n'est pas du tout la question. On doit voir le Boulangisme comme une étape dans la série des efforts qu'une nation, dénaturée par les intrigues de l'étranger, tente pour retrouver sa véritable direction. (Œuvre III, p.377)

Barrès is clearly encoding his version of events with a strong political and philosophical message. He is sublimating the person of the General and transforming the rise and fall of Boulangism into a symbolic manifestation of the nation's collective lack of direction. Here we have Barrès mythologising real events and people, transforming them into a story. Furthermore, he is using this transformation as a type of propaganda which is presented as an account of reality. It is in the aftermath of the failure of Boulangism that *Leurs figures* begins. Did Barrès continue to represent reality in the same way in this last novel of the trilogy and, if so, to what end? The subject matter of *Leurs figures* is different to that of *L'Appel au soldat*, simply because Boulangism is over and Barrès turns his attention to the scandals which were prevalent in the political sphere of the day. Does this shift in focus affect the manner in which Barrès transforms the real people and events?

### **Fictionalising Politics**

In *Leurs figures* Barrès continued with his well-defined temporal structure. Each novel of this trilogy begins with a date: *Les Déracinés* opens with 'En octobre 1879' and *L'Appel au soldat* with 'En octobre 1885'. The third novel begins, 'En 1892', and although this is less specific than the previous two openings, it still resonates

with the reader as the next stage of Barrès's historical account of this period. The difference between this opening and that of *Les Déracinés* and *L'Appel au soldat* is the level of specificity of the events which are being reported. This opening passage is worth closer study as it is indicative of much of the tone of the text:

En 1892, la France souterraine, sous-parlementaire, a perdu sa pente: avec le Boulangisme, elle courait à ses destinées (on ne les voyait pas, mais on sentait l'élan); après la mort du Général, tout redevient un vague marais. Seulement, de temps à autre, montent à la surface des fusées de haine, des gaz malsains, pareils à ces cloches qui viennent crever sur la Seine stagnante, à la hauteur de Clichy.

«Les temps héroïques sont clos», répète volontiers le député Renaudin, et une preuve entre mille, c'est que ce «traître» coudoie impunément ses anciens compagnons Boulangistes.

Dans cet affaissement général, la petite société formée depuis douze ans, depuis le lycée de Nancy, par les jeunes Lorrains, élèves de Bouteiller, se fût elle-même dissoute sans la volonté de Suret-Lefort qui s'appliquait systématiquement à garder ses relations. (Œuvre IV, p.227)

Whereas the opening date of *Les Déracinés* refers specifically to the arrival of Bouteiller in the lycée and that of *L'Appel au soldat* refers to the moment when Sturel hears Thérèse Alison has got married, this opening date refers to the general state of the nation, as the narrator sees it, during the period after Boulanger's death. The first paragraph is less temporally and personally specific as it attempts to diagnose the spiritual health of France. Here the reader is presented with an image of France at its lowest ebb, both spiritually and politically which is described in terms of stagnation and decay. In the first paragraph of the passage, the narrator inserts an image of Boulangism's vitality between the two images of decay and immobility, just as Barrès believed Boulangism was a period of energy and hope coming in between periods of decline. Again there is the Bergsonian term 'élan', reinforcing Barrès's belief in the relationship between the spiritual, metaphysical decay of France and its political problems. This link is compounded in the last image of the first paragraph; France has become 'un vague marais', the stagnation of which is

only broken by 'des fusées de haine, des gaz malsains', although where such hate comes from and at whom it is directed is unclear. These manifestations are compared to the stagnating Seine, normally the force and life of Paris, which is broken only by 'ces cloches qui viennent crever'; these metaphors of decay demonstrate Barrès's determination to both dramatise and generalise the political situation he observed during this period.

The dramatisation is further achieved through the entry of the fictional characters into the text at this point. In the previous two novels Barrès used Sturel, Rœmerspacher and the other young men to demonstrate the effects of *déracinement* on characters from various backgrounds and the hope provided to some of these young men by Boulangism. It is clear from this opening paragraph that the interplay between the fictional characters and the real world is to continue in *Leurs figures*; first, there is a comment on the situation by Renaudin, «Les temps héroïques sont clos», followed by the dissolution of the group which parallels the 'affaissement général'. Renaudin, a member to the Chamber of Deputies who had betrayed his fellow Boulangists by publishing *Les Coulisses du Boulangisme*, is representative here of the political pragmatist who has used Boulanger for his own ends, just as Sturel is representative of the sincere Boulangist. Sturel, the character that most resembles a young Barrès in these novels, vows to avenge Boulanger at the end of *L'Appel au soldat*<sup>21</sup> and in the opening chapter of *Leurs figures* he says he will do

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<sup>21</sup> See Œuvre III, p.215. Here Sturel declares: 'dans un an il sera vengé', in response to the comment that in a year the General will be forgotten.



this by exposing the *parlementaires* who have been involved in the Panama scandal.<sup>22</sup>

From the outset of the novel, therefore, there is a conflict established between the fictional Sturel and the real participants in the Panama scandal, Baron Joseph Reinach, Arton and Dr. Cornelius Herz.<sup>23</sup> Sturel is the imagined avenger of Boulangism, a fictionalised representative of Barrès's own beliefs, while those he aims his vengeance towards (Reinach and others) are stylised versions of real people. According to Zeev Sternhell, this style of writing real events is a form of history. What Sternhell says about *L'Appel au soldat* could surely also be applied to *Leurs figures*: 'L'Appel au soldat est, bien sûr, un roman, mais c'est aussi de l'histoire. En comparant l'ouvrage à d'autres sources de l'époque, aux *Cahiers*, en consultant les écrits d'historiens contemporains, on s'aperçoit qu'il est relativement aisé de distinguer dans l'œuvre de Barrès la réalité de la fiction.'<sup>24</sup>

However, the basic premise of modern historical research is surely to attempt to re-form events in such a way as to render the telling as close to the original occurrence as possible. This cannot be said to have been Barrès's project in *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale*. Indeed, his thesis was to fictionalise the nation's state of health, as he wrote in his *Cahiers* on the completion of *Les Déracinés*: 'J'ai

<sup>22</sup> See Œuvre III, p.229. This desire to expose scandal has already been set up in *L'Appel au soldat*, when a report concerning the Panama scandal, based on the facts on the case, had been prepared by Sturel and others for the General to use against his parliamentary adversaries.

<sup>23</sup> This scandal broke in 1891. The engineer Ferdinand de Lesseps, who had been behind the successful Suez Canal project 25 years earlier, had started on a project in 1879 to cross Central America by canal in Panama. The project was very problematic and the financial backers were threatened with the loss of all their money. The Compagnie universelle du canal interocéanique de Panama was only granted a state loan in 1888 after the company had paid off several politicians. The company still went bankrupt, however, and shareholders accused members of parliament of corruption. The scandal was heightened by the fact that the promoters of the company included Reinach and Herz, who were both Jews. This fact was pounced upon by Drumont, who alleged in his anti-Semitic periodical *La Libre Parole* that Jews were behind the whole affair.

<sup>24</sup> Zeev Sternhell, *Maurice Barrès et le nationalisme français* (Armand Colin, 1972), p.111.

montré la France dissociée et décérébrée. Dissociée, c'est son état. Je l'ai fait voir en peignant les Reinach et les Portalis. Décérébrée, un Bouteiller qui pouvait, qui devrait être son cerveau incline vers ces canailles parlementaires Reinach et Portalis.'(Cahiers, p.91) Here we see the link Barrès made between his fictional representation of real and imagined people and the collective portrayal of the nation he was trying to achieve; he believed that through stylised portraits of real people he could create a distilled vision of France at the time. His version of historical writing was not, therefore, one based on an individual reporting the events he was witness to in the most objective way possible, but rather one which attempted to create a collective image of the nation based on fictionalised portraits of several characters, one layered over another.<sup>25</sup> This is creation and transformation rather than reportage. This collective transformation (whether sublimating characters such as Boulanger or the unfavourable mutation of Burdeau into Bouteiller) was fiction, but also a form of theorising on past events. Barrès claimed that this form of observation and transformation was an integral part of his literary and philosophical theories, as this extract from his *Cahiers*, written in 1902, demonstrates: 'Je m'élance dans l'abîme des sons et j'en tire une œuvre d'art épurée. Je m'élance dans l'intrigue politique et j'en tire une doctrine de la terre et des morts.'<sup>26</sup> Here we see Barrès's assertion of the power he had to transform reality into a heightened artistic and philosophical vision. He believed he had the power and authority, as a writer of significance and stature,

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<sup>25</sup> Many fictional characters in *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale* are not completely imagined, but rather creations which were based on real people: Sturel could be argued to be representative of a young Barrès; Bouteiller was based on Barrès's teacher, Auguste Burdeau.

<sup>26</sup> Barrès, *Mes Cahiers*, p.155.

to re-create events and people in order to instruct his readers as to the state of France's spiritual health.

This diagnosis of the ill health of the nation is expressed in *Les Déracinés* through the actions and choices of the group of young men from Lorraine. This group (whose members each somehow forms part of a collective *moi*, each expressing different parts of Barrès himself and his childhood friends) have to decide between the theories of individualism or collectivism.<sup>27</sup> Their choice to act together (although this later disintegrates) is focused on two figures: Taine and Napoleon. It is Rœmerspacher's conversation with Taine and the group's visit to Napoleon's tomb which confirms their commitment to each other.<sup>28</sup> Again, there is a mythologizing of real individuals to create a synthesis of the real and the fictive, the individual and the collective thought, the metaphysical and the historical. Barrès inserted into the text elements of the real person which harmonised well with the elements of other characters to create a whole argument.<sup>29</sup> This synthesis is what Bancquart calls 'la poésie' of Barrès's historical writing; he was not reporting historical fact but attempting to transform reality, to synthesise individuals into a

<sup>27</sup> See Vital Rambaud's notes on *Les Déracinés* in Maurice Barrès, *Romans et voyages: Le Culte du moi; L'Ennemi des lois; Du sang, de la volupté et de la mort; Le Roman de l'énergie nationale* (Robert Laffont, 1994), pp.1345-1346.

<sup>28</sup> See chapters 7 and 8 of *Les Déracinés*. Taine takes Rœmerspacher to see a tree in the Place des Invalides which represents the social connection between individuals: 'c'est la position humble et dépendante de l'individu dans le temps et l'espace, dans la collectivité et dans la suite des êtres. Chacun s'efforce de jouer son petit rôle et s'agite comme frissonne chaque feuille du platane.' (Œuvre III, p.155) Napoleon is called 'Professeur d'énergie' who inspires them to collectively seek their fortune: '-Et NOUS, dit Sturel, allons-nous déjà glisser sous la vie?... Ils laissent Naopléon, ils reviennent à eux-mêmes dont ils sont chargés. C'est assez dire: *l'Empereur*; et son grand nom, qui crée des individus, les force à dire: *Moi, Nous*.' (Œuvre III, p.176, all italics and capitals author's own).

<sup>29</sup> For example, Taine's theories are represented by his allegory of the tree, yet Barrès rejected other areas of his work. Barrès wrote in *La Revue blanche* on the 15 August 1897: 'Taine [...] n'est pas un professeur d'énergie. Il justifie la timidité, le repliement sur soi-même, et sous le nom d'*acceptation* certaines servilités' (italics author's own).

collective *moi*.<sup>30</sup> Bancquart argues that this is due to Barrès's rejection of the German model of historical inquiry which had been forged throughout the nineteenth century; she points to his admiration of Michelet's work as a model for his own investigation into the effect the past and the *pays* have on the individual. History in this form becomes a method of reuniting the individual with the infinite *moi*; it is through the fictionalised representation of the real in his fiction that Barrès attempted to create a collective sense of self.<sup>31</sup>

Barrès's representation of historical reality in fiction is a facet of his theories about the tension between the individual and society. In *Le Culte du moi*, the outside world only seems to enter into Philippe's fictional reality through his meditations exalting Saint-Simon, Benjamin Constant and others (just as reality only seems to enter into the imagined in the text through these sections of dense prose). Similarly, in *Leurs figures* the representation of real people, such as Reinach, Clemenceau, Burdeau and others in the narrative transforms reality into a Barrèsian version of itself.<sup>32</sup> This version is at times condemning, at times exalting, and is done with a

<sup>30</sup> 'L'histoire n'est plus alors pour Barrès qu'une des exaltations possibles de l'individu et de la foule. La logique de Taine est noyée dans la poésie. Comme les mots d'un poème, les événements n'ont de signification que par l'arrangement que leur impose l'écrivain. Et cette signification n'est pas intellectuelle, elle est incantatoire.' Marie-Claire Bancquart, *Les Écrivains et l'histoire* (Nizet, 1966), p.86.

<sup>31</sup> Bancquart argues that this transformatory approach to history developed into a more acute sense of subjectivity by the time *Leurs figures* was published. She quotes from Barrès's *cahiers* from this period and goes on to comment on the extract: '« [...]c'est l'homme, c'est l'historien qui crée le fait historique. » [...] Déclaration essentielle, qui fait la lumière sur l'évolution de Barrès rejetant de plus en plus l'«objectivité» de l'histoire conçue par les Allemands comme une science érudite.' *Les Écrivains et l'histoire*, p.67.

<sup>32</sup> Some of Clemenceau's admirers, such as Jean Martet who wrote *Le Silence de M.Clemenceau*, claimed that in the light of his presidency during WWI, Barrès regretted writing such an unfavourable portrayal of Clemenceau. Philippe Barrès, the author's son, claimed this was not so, as he wrote in a letter addressed to Martet in 1932: 'vous faites dire à mon père: «C'est le grand regret de ma vie d'avoir écrit *Leurs figures*. Cette phrase ne peut avoir été prononcée par mon père – non plus qu'aucune phrase équivalente. [...] Il le faisait avec une parfaite sérénité, dans la conviction de s'être placé au premier rang des hommes qui maintinrent les valeurs nationales essentielles, à un moment où Clemenceau se trouvait parmi les destructeurs.' (Œuvre IV, p.223.

dual aim. As Sternhell argues, historical reality is transformed in this way to present observations, but also to convince readers of the validity of Barrès's political arguments; history is 'recomposée, réinterprété à deux niveaux, il possède deux dimensions: une dimension descriptive et analytique et une dimension prescriptive et idéale.'<sup>33</sup>

This dual purpose of Barrès's historical narrative is evident in the text of *Leurs figures*, as the familiar pattern of description framed with sections of didactic argument and observation of the actions of the characters continues. The chapters roll on full of detail; there are vast amounts of dates and figures, pinpointing exact moments in history relating the narrative to historical fact. Barrès also included extracts from notes, speeches and articles which all give the text an air of historical authenticity.<sup>34</sup> The inclusion of such an amount of detail makes for difficult reading today, as the general reader is unlikely to have a good grasp of the events and characters to make any sense of the plot or to access supporting historical material to confirm the authenticity of much of it. Indeed, it is questionable whether such a level of detail would make the narrative clear to even the readers of 1902, ten years after the events were originally reported. It does, however, make for a narrative which has qualities of an eye-witness account and is therefore more believable.

<sup>33</sup> Sternhell, *Maurice Barrès et le nationalisme français*, p.110.

<sup>34</sup> For example, Barrès included letters between Quesnay de Beaurepaire, who was the Minister of Justice at this time, concerning the Panama case dated 19 November 1892, quickly followed by a letter from Beaurepaire to Reinach, dated the same day, warning him of the impending action against him. By using such authentic material, Barrès demonstrates the genuine corruption of the characters; it is as if they show themselves to be guilty by their own hand.

## Crime and Ideology

The financial corruption which Barrès wished to convey to the reader through the detail and through the transformation of real characters has a definite racial slant when it comes to the characters of Joseph and Jacques de Reinach. As I have said, a few of the characters involved in the Panama scandal were Jewish, and this was clearly of great significance to Barrès. Indeed, this novel is dedicated to Edouard Drumont as 'ce témoignage' of events. In chapter 5, which is entitled 'Un rat empoisonné',<sup>35</sup> we are given the scene from the trial when the Baron de Reinach is questioned. The interplay between the observation of the baron and the magistrate is revealing:

Déjà l'après-midi est avancée. Sous la lampe du juge, ce gros juif paraît aussi méprisable qu'il était redoutable dans l'obscurité de ses intrigues. Sa graisse heureuse et rose devient flasque dans le malheur. Jadis, pour arracher de l'argent à M. de Lesseps, il disait que ses battements de cœur allaient le faire mourir. Cette comédie l'a mené dans une tragédie. C'est bien à une accélération cardiaque déterminée par la terreur qu'il faut attribuer maintenant sa voix basse, coupée et si peu intelligible que les griffonnements du greffier la couvrent.

- De ces sommes, dit-il, je pourrai faire la justification au moment donné.

- Ce moment est venu.

Ah! le petit magistrat à huit mille francs, qui, tout à l'heure, sa serviette sous le bras, dans la boue de novembre, courra pour saisir son tramway, il tient le gros banquier! Il ne sera pas heureux dans sa brillante voiture rapide, l'insolent millionnaire du parc Monceau!

Le magistrat pourtant ne se laisse pas aller à son instinct; il conduit en chien discipliné devant un gibier qu'on ne lui abandonne pas. (Œuvre IV, pp.268-9)

Firstly, the narrator directs the reader's eyes over the figure of the baron. 'Sous la lampe du juge', his real character appears to be revealed, just as his physical appearance is illuminated. The objective light of justice could be equated with the revealing light of the narrator as he shows the baron as he really was. The objectivity

<sup>35</sup> This image is used several times by Barrès to denote the undoing of Reinach. Albert Thibaudet points out that this section of the novel could be inspired by: 'la course à l'abîme de la *Damnation de Faust* scandée par le Has! has! de Méphistophélès. C'est le rat empoisonné de la chanson des étudiants qui d'affolement est sauté dans la musique, et que la musique roule derrière le cheval infernal', Thibaudet, *La Vie de Maurice Barrès* (Gallimard, 1921), pp.252-3. This image is compounded by the fact that the baron de Reinach committed suicide by poisoning himself, 19 November 1892, see Œuvre IV, p.298.

of the narrator is, of course, questionable and the way in which he passes judgement and directs the reader is clear in this passage. The baron is described as a 'gros juif', 'méprisable', 'flasque', 'le gros banquier', 'l'insolent millionnaire' and lastly referred to as 'un gibier'. There is a collection of images here which are layered to form an unwholesome and corrupt character in the eyes of the narrator, which can be clarified into different strands of attack on Reinach: appearance, race, wealth and corruption. The baron is overweight (therefore lacking in the Bergsonian energy and vitality Barrès so praised in Boulanger in *L'Appel au soldat*) and his face is flabby. He is Jewish, which is of great significance in Barrès's case against him; Barrès's theory of French collective identity, which is being fictionalised in these novels, asserts that Jews are not part of the French nation as they do not share the same cultural heritage and do not have the tradition of 'la terre et les morts' which forms the roots of the French nation.<sup>36</sup>

The contrast between the wealthy baron and the poor magistrate presents the prosecution of Reinach as a form of social justice; in the latter half of the passage the text's focus shifts to narration coloured by the thoughts of the poor 'petit' prosecutor as he metes out justice on the corrupt captain of commerce. Reinach's race, appearance and financial corruption mean that his powerful position as a leading

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<sup>36</sup> Anti-Semitism was a key part of Barrès's theory of nationality, which is evident from his early journalism in *La Cocarde* right the way through to his later trilogy of novels *Les Bastions de l'Est*. His anti-Dreyfusard stance during the Dreyfus Affair and his links with Drumont (who was also a supporter of Boulanger) meant this aspect of his politics was well publicised. Even in 1903, when it was clear that Dreyfus had not committed the crime for which he was jailed, Barrès asserted that he remained guilty. It is clear from this extract from Barrès's *Cahiers* that he believed Dreyfus was guilty of not belonging to the French nation: 'Du commencement à la fin Dreyfus est resté un être énigmatique, une sorte d'animal à sang froid, très différent à nous, imperméable à toutes les excitations dont nous affectent notre terre, nos ancêtres, notre drapeau, le mot «honneur». [...] Dreyfus a commis le crime', *Cahiers*, p.191. Just as Dreyfus was guilty of being a Jew, so the baron, in the above passage, is guilty of what he is as well as what he has done.

banker is undermined. The balance of power is reversed as the wealthy baron is now in the hands of the lowly magistrate; he becomes the game chased by the disciplined prosecutor.<sup>37</sup> Barrès's representation of the baron de Reinach's prosecution is not a simple report of the dialogue or events which took place, but rather a case made out against the banker in terms of race and corruption. Through a mixture of metaphors and images, Barrès represents the baron as guilty of who he is as well as the crime he has committed. This representation of financial corruption is, therefore, another aspect of Barrès's diagnosis of the poor health of the nation. Those in authority over the nation, such as Clemenceau who was embroiled in the scandal, were being drawn into corruption by those who did not belong to the nation. The revelation of financial corruption in *Leurs figures* is, therefore, a part of the revelation of the state of the nation as Barrès saw it at the time. It is a diagnosis of the *déracinement* and identity crisis he believed was occurring in France during this period. This was corruption which was, according to the author, not only inherent in the political or financial systems, but in the fabric of the nation's identity. His interpretation of real events becomes a spiritualised version of history; this is not a documentary, but a dramatisation which Barrès believed would heighten the reality he was attempting to convey.

Through this transformed version of events, Barrès again demonstrated the responsibility he felt towards the reading public to interpret past events in a persuasive way so as to reveal that which he believed was the truth. André Siegfried wrote of *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale* in 1956: 'Il s'agit non d'une histoire

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<sup>37</sup> Again, there is an allegorical connection between the Jew and the animal; just as Dreyfus was 'une sorte d'animal' so Reinach is reduced to 'un gibier'.



romancée, conception suspecte, mais d'un roman historique où la réalité, mêlée de fiction, apparaît ainsi plus profondément réelle encore, dans le sens où l'on dit que la légende est plus vraie que l'histoire.'<sup>38</sup> Siegfried claimed that Barrès was 'le meilleur écrivain politique' of his generation because of his instinct for political survival and intelligence, which he claimed was the overriding factor in Barrès's fiction. This argument is not altogether convincing. It seems more reasonable to conclude that Barrès's political fiction is not a product of his political career, but rather his political career was a product of his metaphysical convictions and theories. It is fitting, therefore, that *Leurs figures* does not end with the death of the baron or a show-down with Clemenceau, but rather with a brief meeting between the two most important fictional characters of the trilogy, Bouteiller and Sturel.

The two chance upon each other as they are walking by a canal. Bouteiller, a *chequard* (a politician who had taken money during the scandal), is being ridiculed by some gardeners. Instead of giving the reader a complete confrontation between them, the narrator gives three points of comparison between them, which are laid out in a sort of table format and written in the first person (*Œuvre IV*, pp.445-449). They are supposed to convey the inner thoughts and conclusions of the two. This is an attempt by Barrès to draw parallels between Sturel and Bouteiller that would ultimately lead to some sort of conclusion of the narrative. It is almost a metaphysical checklist, designed to neatly compare the two men and the effects their experiences have had on them. In so doing, this checklist also compares two opposing political positions. Although the inclusion of the table itself into the narrative is rather awkward, it is significant that Barrès chose to end his trilogy in

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<sup>38</sup> André Siegfried, 'Le Meilleur écrivain politique', *Le Figaro*, 11 June 1956, p.1.

this manner. Not only is this scene indicative of how representative of various political and metaphysical theories the fictional characters in these novels are, but it also demonstrates the importance Barrès placed on such theories in relation to the more concrete realities of corruption and crime. It is with the direct comparison of the fictional embodiments of these theories with which Barrès chose to conclude. Political fiction of this type is not about letting the events speak for themselves, but transforming these events into a narrative which re-tells reality as fiction. In so doing, Barrès attempted to render the representation of reality more real than historical events themselves.

### Authenticating the Text

If Barrès was attempting to fictionalise the real, then Darien was attempting the opposite process: his intention was to make the fictional appear real. His fictional representation of financial corruption comes in the form of *Le Voleur*, perhaps his best known novel, published by Stock in 1897. It is probably better known that many of his works because of the attention which was paid to it in the 1950s, following a re-edition of the novel in 1955 and a film version, directed by Louis Malle.<sup>39</sup> The world that Darien wanted to portray is one of an underworld of thieves and robbers who steal from the rich and the bourgeois.<sup>40</sup> The thief of the title is Georges Randal,

<sup>39</sup> The 1955 edition was produced by J-J Pauvert and caused a stir in Parisian literary circles, as Pascal Pia describes: 'à peine était-elle sortie de l'atelier du brocheur qu'un jury de bouquinistes, présidé par Pierre MacOrlan, couronnait ce roman fort injustement négligé durant plus d'un demi-siècle.' Pascal, *Romanciers, poètes, essayistes du XIXe siècle* (Denoël, 1971), p.467. The novel came again to the attention of the media in 1967 when Louis Malle directed a film version of the story.

<sup>40</sup> *Le Voleur* was envisioned by Darien as a part of a larger series of novels, which was never completed: 'Lorsque j'ai écrit *Le Voleur*, j'avais fait un plan d'une série de romans dont je voulais faire une sorte de nouvelle comédie humaine. Le premier était *Le Voleur*, le second *L'Épaulette*, le troisième *Le Marchand de viande* (les femmes), le quatrième *La Maison du mouchard* (inutile de

who is the narrator of the text. It is this narrative perspective which makes Darien's approach to the representation of financial corruption and crime different to that of Barrès. Here the reader sees the crime from the inside, from the point of view of the criminal rather than the authoritative narrator who directs the reader's judgement.

It is this narrative technique which renders the text more authentic and believable. This is compounded by Darien's use of the preface to set the text up as a type of memoir rather than a piece of fiction. The paratextual material that sometimes accompanies Darien's novels often provides valuable insights into his writing.<sup>41</sup> They are often offered as explanations of the purpose of the novel and the method in which it was written. Sometimes, the provenance of the material upon which the fiction is based is made explicit; however, the preface to *Le Voleur* performs a slightly different function. It is in this preface that the premise of reality is set up, so it is worth closer examination. From the outset, Darien dissociates himself from the text: 'Le livre qu'on va lire, et que je signe, n'est pas de moi.' (Voleurs, p.329) There then follows speculation on the origin of the text and the readers' expectations of it:

Cette déclaration faite, on pourra supposer à première vue, à la lecture du titre que le manuscrit m'en a été remis en dépôt par un ministre déchu, confié à son lit de mort par un notaire infidèle, ou légué par un caissier prévaricateur. Mais ces hypothèses bien que vraisemblables, je me hâte de la dire, seraient absolument fausses. Ce livre ne m'a point été remis par un ministre, ni confié par un notaire, ni légué par un caissier.

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vous donner la suite). Les mêmes personnages reviennent (mêlés à d'autres) dans tous ces romans. En somme, c'est la système de Balzac, mais les préoccupations sont différentes.' As quoted by Walter Redfern, *Georges Darien: Robbery and Private Enterprise* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1985), pp.153-4.

<sup>41</sup> For example, the introduction to *Biribi* provides the reader with the confirmation that the text is based on real event: 'Ce livre est un livre vrai. *Biribi* été vécu.' (Voleurs, p.9). Similarly, the preface to *Gottlieb Krumm, made in England* indicates to the reader the plausibility of the novel: 'Les personnages représentés dans ce roman, sont-ils peints d'après? Sans hésiter, je réponds: oui.' (Voleurs, p.1031).

In this section of the preface, Darien is clearly attempting to distance this novel from those, like *Leurs figures*, which deal with the corruption of politicians. In the 1890s, it seems the readers would presume the subject of a novel with such a title was the scandalous world of corrupt politics; Darien understands that such 'hypothèses' are 'vraisemblables'. Not only then, do we have a dig at parliamentary politics, but Darien is also determined to distance himself from this type of text. This distance created between writer and text is firmly cemented when Darien reveals the source of the text: 'Je l'ai volé'. It is not his novel, he did not write this text. During the four-page preface, Darien explains how he found the manuscript in a hotel room in Brussels. As the story unfolds, there are certain aspects that cast doubt on the veracity of Darien's claim.

Firstly, the use of irony and humour lends an air of improbability to the scenario. For example: 'Ça se passe en Belgique. J'avais été faire un petit voyage, il y a quelque temps, dans cette contrée si peu connue (je parle sérieusement). Ma raison pour passer ainsi la frontière? Mon Dieu! J'allais voir le roi Léopold, avant de mourir' (p.329). As an anarchist, it was well-known that Darien did indeed go to Belgium, but this was more due to the need to escape prosecution after the 1894 'lois scélérates' than any desire to see King Leopold. Furthermore, the name of the thief is Georges Randal, which is very similar to the pseudonym Darien was using in his journalism at this time, Georges Brandal.<sup>42</sup> There are, therefore, elements of

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<sup>42</sup> Darien used this pseudonym (Georges, Geo or Goe Brandal) in a series of articles for *L'Endehors* between August and December 1892, including 'L'Agitation cosmopolite', *L'Endehors*, no.70, 4 September 1892, pp.2-3 and 'Stambouloff', *L'Endehors*, no.66, 7 August 1892, in which he makes his anarchist credentials clear. During the introduction of laws prohibiting the promotion of violence, anarchist writers at this time often used pseudonyms. For a more detailed explanation of this pseudonym see Patrick Fréchet, 'L'Endehors et L'Escarmouche', *L'Etoile-absinthe*, 33-34 (1987), pp.25-27.

Darien's real life mixed in with the fictional here. As Pascal Pia points out, even though *Le Voleur* presents itself as a text claiming verisimilitude based on paratextual material, it also presents itself as a novel and one in which the narrative is at times ironically self-reflexive. Even so, those critics of the time who commented on the novel believed Darien was basing his account of robbery on personal experience.<sup>43</sup> It is clear from the writings of his publisher, Stock, that Darien was a writer who was consistently aloof (whether due to political exile or not), so it is not beyond reason for others to believe that he was capable of such a crime.<sup>44</sup> The critical reaction to *Le Voleur* seems to be a mixture of curiosity and a rare admiring review.<sup>45</sup> Darien's creation of the mystery surrounding the provenance of the novel and his own air of aloofness and isolation all contribute to the ironic trap set to catch unwitting readers of *Le Voleur*. In blurring the lines between writer and criminal, Darien draws attention to his own status as an exiled writer while also creating a sense of mystery and aloofness in the text itself. The humour of the text is directed at those readers who can perceive the irony of the author at work, those happy few who are not ensnared in the trap he has set.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> See Pascal Pia, *Romanciers, poètes, essayistes du XIXe siècle*, p.468.

<sup>44</sup> For example, in his *Mémoire d'un éditeur* (Stock, 1935), the publisher writes: 'Darien, en effet, était un curieux homme, un personnage énigmatique, même inquiétant; sa vie a toujours été des plus mystérieuses; personne n'a pu la percer ou l'expliquer.' p.60.

<sup>45</sup> For example, Ouida (aka Mlle de la Ramée) in *Fortnightly Review* wrote in reaction to *Le Voleur*: 'Le talent de Georges se distingue par une grande originalité. Son style lui appartient en propre, sa manière de conter ne ressemble à celle de nul autre. Il ne se rattache à l'école moderne que par son pessimisme désespéré; il est fort, il est intense, il est viril, il est âpre.' As quoted by Auriant, *Darien et l'inhumaine comédie* (Brussels: Ambassade du Livre, 1966), p.84. Also, Alfred Jarry included *Le Voleur* in Dr. Faustroll's library, *Gestes et opinions du docteur Faustroll, pataphysicien* (Gallimard, 1980). Stock wrote about this novel in his memoirs: '*Le Voleur*, qui n'a pas eu le succès de public qu'il méritait, mais qui a été très goûté dans les milieux littéraires, est un roman curieux' p.59.

<sup>46</sup> The insertion of Roger-la-Honte, a well-known character of the feuilletons, contributes further to the doubt Darien is creating in the reader's mind over the nature of this text, through mixing a fictional character into a narrative which the author has striven to authenticate.

The self-aware nature of the narrative is also evident in the preface, as we are introduced to the play on language and writing which will recur throughout the novel. First, Darien links together the identities of the writer and the thief; Randal is a thief who writes, Darien is a writer who thieves. Secondly, this dynamic is twisted again when Darien claims Randal's prose is beyond his own ability: 'C'est ce livre que je voudrais bien avoir fini; ce livre que je n'ai pas écrit, et que je tente vainement de récrire. [...] Il m'aurait fallu démolir le manuscrit d'un bout à l'autre, et le reconstruire entièrement; mais je manque d'expérience pour ces choses-là'. (p.322). Darien is distancing himself from the creation and construction of the text and, in so doing, absolving himself of the responsibility for its content.

The reader arrives at the beginning of the text prepared for an account of crime, written by a criminal. The disowning of the text by Darien renders it free from moral restrictions; his authorial responsibility towards the reader to represent events in a faithful way (which is taken so seriously by Barrès) has been passed on to a thief. The first-person narration lends itself to a memoir style and the first chapter of the novel is a description of Randal's memories of childhood. The style is almost conversational as the narrator addresses the reader: 'Des souvenirs? Si vous voulez' (p.325). Randal then goes on to recount the first of two memories of his father:

Un dimanche, il m'a emmené à une fête de banlieue. Comme j'avais fait manœuvre sans succès les différents tourniquets chargés de pavés de Reims, de porcelaines utiles et de lapins mélancoliques, il s'est mis en colère.

- Tu vas voir, a-t-il dit, que Phanor est plus adroit que toi.

Il a fait dresser le chien contre la machine et la lui a fait mettre en mouvement d'un coup de patte autoritaire. Phanor a gagné le gros lot, un grand morceau de pain d'épice.

- Puisqu'il l'a gagné, a prononcé mon père, qu'il le mange!

Il a déposé le pain d'épice sur l'herbe et le chien s'est mis à l'entamer, avec plaisir certainement, mais sans enthousiasme. Des hommes vêtus en ouvriers, derrière nous, ont murmuré.

- C'est honteux, ont-ils dit, de jeter ce pain d'épice à un chien lorsque tant d'enfants seraient si heureux de l'avoir.

Mon père n'a pas bronché. Mais, quand nous avons été partis, je l'ai entendu qui disait à ma mère:

- Ce sont des souteneurs, tu sais.

J'ai demandé ce que c'était que des souteneurs. On ne m'a pas répondu. Alors, j'ai pensé que les souteneurs étaient des gens qui aimaient beaucoup les enfants. (Voleurs, p.325)

Here we have a scene from childhood, not written in the present tense as in *Bas les cœurs!*, but rather presented as a memory which typifies the character of Randal's father. He is, in Randal's eyes, a typical member of the bourgeoisie. It is significant that in this scene they are trying to win something; this is a memory about gain. The description of the game itself reinforces the pointlessness and the pettiness of the father's actions; the prizes the boy is aiming for are plaques of Reims, 'useful' porcelains and unhappy rabbits. The fun of the game is removed by the chase for prizes which are not worth winning. The futility of the exercise is evident again when Phanor wins the bread; the dog eats it 'sans enthousiasme'.

Darien also injects a sense of injustice into this scene through the characters of the workers standing nearby. They are the voice of common sense in opposition to the father's bourgeois values of ownership. There is, therefore, a class distinction in this scene: the workers are on the side of sense and justice; the bourgeois is sided with pettiness and greed. This distinction is clarified through the use of the child's perspective; the harshness of the bourgeois father is contrasted with the kind comments of the observers. Humour is also injected into the narrative when his father calls these workers 'pimps'; the young Randal then believes that this term means people who are nice to children. Just as in *Bas les cœurs!*, humour, pathos and

bitterness are all combined through childlike narration.<sup>47</sup> It is in this first chapter of *Le Voleur* that Darien used this method of establishing the reader's sympathy for his narrator-thief. Through such memories, Darien created the motivation for Randal to steal and the sympathy of the reader towards him. As we have seen in other Darien texts, like *Biribi* and *Bas les cœurs!*, he did not aim to convince the reader, as Barrès did, through didactic arguments or moralistic characters, but rather to evoke an emotional response in the reader. Again, the reader is presented with a vision of the isolated individual who cannot depend on his family for sincerity, truth or genuine emotional bonds.

However, the consequences of these family relationships are different to those Darien presented in *Biribi* or *Bas les cœurs!* While the narrator-characters of these earlier novels continue to search for truth and sincerity outside of their families (Froissard in *Queslier*, Jean Barbier in *Merlin*) Randal is corrupted by his experiences. Darien points to his uncle (who takes charge of Randal after his parents die) and the education system as sources of such influence.<sup>48</sup> His uncle steals his inheritance and this provokes in Randal a love of money: 'Je sais que je suis volé. Je vois que je suis volé. [...] J'ai peur d'être un pauvre – et j'aime l'argent.' (p.332) Here is more motivation, then, for the evolution of Randal into the thief. Not only is the author distanced from the responsibility of the text, but in the first few chapters

<sup>47</sup> In this narrative technique we see the influence of Jules Vallès on Darien. Many comparisons could be drawn between Vallès's *L'Enfant* (1879) or *Le Bachelier* (1881) and, in particular, *Bas les cœurs!* and *L'Épaulette*. In a similar way to Vallès, Darien used the child narrator, the present tense and a humour which drew out the ridiculous in the parental characters. See Christopher Lloyd, 'Jules Vallès, Georges Darien et le roman contestataire', *Les Amis de Vallès*, 2 (October 1985), pp.239-250.

<sup>48</sup> Randal appears more and more constricted into bourgeois behaviour during his adolescence: 'Éducation. La chasse aux instincts. On me reproche mes défauts; on me fait honte de mes imperfections. Je dois pas être comme je suis, mais *comme il faut*. Pourquoi faut-il?... On m'incite à suivre les bons exemples; parce qu'il n'y a que les mauvais qui vous décident à agir.' (*Voleurs*, p.333).



the narrator is distancing himself from the responsibility of the content of his life and consequently of the text. The representation of the criminal is, therefore, more personalised than in *Leurs figures*. The reader is given the background and psychological motivation of the thief; Barrès does not provide the reader with such information about Reinach.

According to Redfern, the representation of financial corruption was the key to Darien's overall literary project. He identifies one of the major themes of Darien's fiction as: 'the ravages wreaked by money on family-relationships.'<sup>49</sup> The older generation often corrupt, betray or deprive the younger.<sup>50</sup> I would go further than this and argue that this theme is a part of a broader dynamic in Darien's fiction. If we include *Biribi* into the argument (in which the young military prisoner is brutalised by those in charge), then it is reasonable to conclude that Darien was creating a larger textual conflict between those in authority and those in their charge. This exploitation of positions of power (whether by parents, officers or teachers) is also evident in the power over financial resources. Whereas Redfern applies the language of robbery and ownership to all relationships in which one party is in authority,<sup>51</sup> I would apply the language of power to Darien's representation of financial corruption. As we have seen, whereas Barrès often sought to endow his narrator with a sense of authority and omniscience, Darien chose to relate his stories through marginalised characters who presented a challenge to authority, such as the

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<sup>49</sup> Redfern, p.21.

<sup>50</sup> As Redfern points out, in *Le Voleur* we have unfeeling parents and a criminal uncle, in *L'Épaulette* a crooked father and in *Bas les cœurs!* a selfish father and an unprincipled grandfather.

<sup>51</sup> For example, when Redfern is commenting on portrayal of education in *Le Voleur* he concludes: 'education is another theft, robbing youth of its self and its possibilities for lively development.' Redfern, p.137.

prisoner, the rebellious child and, in this case, the thief. Darien's narratives were not designed to be related through the authoritative narrator of the *roman à thèse*, but rather through the voice of the isolated individual who reveals aspects of the Third Republic of which Darien was critical: militarism, nationalism and the corrupt pursuit of wealth.

### **Politics and Authority**

If we take *Le Voleur* as addressing the exploitation of positions of power rather than just financial corruption, the portrayal of certain political activists in the novel makes more sense. Chapters eleven, twelve and thirteen describe Randal's encounters with a socialist and an anarchist. Each of these meetings parallels the other, as both talk about socialist and anarchist propaganda. The conversations continue in a similar vein as the two men are compared. Whereas the socialist is hardworking and attentive to his family, the anarchist is 'un trimardeur, qui ne fait pas grand-chose, ne s'inquiète guère de sa famille et n'a nul souci de ses enfants'. Each briefly debates the disadvantages of propaganda with Randal and both discussions end in the same way at the end of chapters eleven and twelve: '- A qui profite-t-elle donc, alors, cette propagande? Il a réfléchi un instant et m'a répondu. - Au mouchard' (p.441 and p.446). This close mirroring of the two discussions is one example of the self-awareness of this narrative. These meetings are representative of Darien's frustrations with organised politics, whether this is socialism or anarchism. This frustration is made more explicit through Randal's thoughts:

On a tellement écrasé le sentiment de la personnalité qu'on a parvenu à forcer l'être même qui se révolte contre une injustice à s'en prendre à la société, chose vague, intangible, invulnérable, inexistante par elle-même, au lieu de s'attaquer au coquin qui a causé ses

griefs. [...] Mais ce sont les institutions, aujourd'hui, qui sont coupables de tout; on a oublié qu'elles n'existent que pas les hommes. [...] Ces socialistes, ces anarchistes!... Aucun qui agisse en socialiste; pas un qui vive en anarchiste... Tout ça finira dans le purin bourgeois. [...] Allons, la bourgeoisie peut dormir tranquille; elle aura encore de beaux jours. (Voleurs, pp.447-8)

Such a passage could be taken from Darien's more polemic work, *La Belle France*, but instead it is inserted as part of Randal's narration.<sup>52</sup> Here we have an example of the combination of voices of Randal and Darien as they address the question of social power. It is not the issue of private ownership which concerns Randal (or Darien) in this passage, but rather that of social authority: the power institutions have over individuals and the impotence of political organisations in the face of such power. Through Randal, Darien constructed a character that acts outside of the legitimate financial and political systems, along with a collection of other 'middle men' who operate outside the boundaries of the law, including the Jew Issacar, l'abbé Lamargelle and Roger-la-Honte. This disparate group is not a band of brothers but a loosely connected affiliation of criminals who occasionally operate together. There is a distrust in *Le Voleur* of any form of organised hierarchy; there is co-operation between individuals but not a chain of command. Indeed, as we can see from the above passage, the narrator is critical of the lack of individuality and personality he sees in those around him, including those involved in radical politics. *Le Voleur* is not an apologetic for any specific political movement or any particular economic method, but rather a defence of the individual in the face of social control.

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<sup>52</sup> Indeed, Darien did address large sections of *La Belle France* to a critique of institutionalised politics, including this passage which uses similar terms to the excerpt from *Le Voleur* quoted above: 'Le Socialisme n'est pas la haine; c'est la discussion, c'est le bavardage, c'est le compromis, c'est la temporisation; c'est tout ce qu'on veut; c'est tout ce que veut la bourgeoisie. C'est la bourgeoisie, oui, qui fait mouvoir l'épouvantail dont on prétendait lui faire peur' (Voleurs, p.1319).

The source of this social control is increasingly identified as the bourgeoisie during the course of the narrative. Randal realises the individual has become alienated from the sources of power and authority; institutions such as parliamentary government, the education system and the Church have become vague, intangible and unassailable bastions of power which are separate from the individual. The loss of individual identity is characterised in *Le Voleur* by a bourgeois costume ball in which individuals lose their own characters and become a mass of rhinestones and masks. The description of one character in particular requires closer examination:

Mouratet, une seconde après, entre dans le salon; et je ne puis retenir un cri à son aspect. Il est ignoble. Ah! cette défroque de criminel – et de quel criminel! – portée par ce bourgeois! Ce n'est pas ridicule, non; mais c'est tellement horrible que c'est inexprimable. Aucune description d'artiste, aucune enluminure d'Épinal, si grandiose que l'ait faite la plume, si atroce que l'ait plaquée la machine, ne pourraient donner l'idée de Barbe-Bleue que j'ai devant moi. C'est quelque chose d'inouï. C'est la bassesse entière de toute une espèce vile sous la dépouille terrible de toute une race cruelle. On a un peu l'impression d'une peau de tigre, comme peinte et fardée pour l'orgie sauvage, jetée sur la croupe fuyante d'une hyène s'évadant d'un charnier; mais on a surtout la sensation d'instincts affreux, impénétrables d'ordinaire et transparaissant tout à coup, par dépit, sous ce déguisement qu'ils dédaignent et dont ils crèvent la cruauté incomplète de l'absolu de leur barbarie. C'est Barbe-Bleue; mais ce n'est Barbe-Bleue que parce que c'est Mouratet. (Voleurs, p.568)

I have included the complete paragraph of this description to demonstrate the unusual nature of this passage in comparison with most of Darien's narrative. It seems strange to be reading a large passage of description written in a relatively intricate way such as this in Darien's text, when in other novels the reader encounters much direct speech and simple phrasing.<sup>53</sup> The sentences are woven around inserted clauses and fairly complicated punctuation is used to link together a chain of various metaphors and images. What is most surprising about this passage,

<sup>53</sup> The contrast between this description of Mouratet and the description Randal gives of himself earlier in the novel when he is dressed up for travelling is striking: 'C'est moi qui porte ce costume de voyage dont l'élégance et la coupe anglaise indiquent une honnête aisance et des goûts cosmopolites, et qui suis coiffé de ce léger chapeau de feutre, signe incontestable et tendances artistiques et d'exquise insouciance. Je parais avoir vingt-cinq ans, pas plus; je suis rose, blond, vigoureux, gentil à croquer... Oui, je sais: j'ai l'air de me nommer Gaston; mais c'est moi tout de même.' (Voleurs, p.566).

however, is that it presents itself as a description, but yet actually describes nothing. In the first half of the paragraph the costume is called 'inexprimable'. Indeed, neither artist nor writer could ever achieve an apt description: 'C'est quelque chose d'inouï'. During the second half of the paragraph, however, a description is attempted, but all that can be achieved is a series of unsatisfying comparisons: '[o]n a un peu l'impression d[e] [...] mais on a surtout la sensation d[e]'. The description is consciously unachieved: Barbe-Bleue is lost in Mouratet, a bourgeois civil servant, and Mouratet is lost in Barbe-Bleue.<sup>54</sup>

The ironic mingling of a *fonctionnaire* with a famous murderer renders the wearer of the costume obscured from the view of the reader, just as the collective identity of those who attend the ball is lost in the mass of their costumes: 'Pourquoi ces gens-là se déguisent-ils? Par nécessité? Pas tous. Le besoin de prendre une attitude vis-à-vis des autres et surtout vis-à-vis de soi, de se paraître naturel à soi-même. Ils n'ont point de personnalité et cherchent à s'en faire une, pour un soir' (p.569).<sup>55</sup> Here again we are presented with the observations of Randal which relate the characters he observes around him to their apparent lack of individuality and personality. He goes on to say:

Pour mon compte, je n'ai jamais éprouvé de surprise à voir un être se démasquer. C'est toujours le visage que je m'attendais à trouver sous le masque qui m'est apparu. Du reste, tel masque, posé sur telle figure, n'a pas du tout le même aspect que s'il en recouvre une autre. Le masque ne dissimule pas, il trahit. [...] Voici la constatation finale: dans cette foule de

<sup>54</sup> The character of Barbe-Bleue was first popularised by Charles Perrault (1628-1703) in his collection of fairytales *Contes de ma mère l'Oye, ou Histoires ou contes du temps passé avec des moralités* (Barbin, 1697). Barbe-Bleue, whose young wife finds the bodies of his former wives in a room her husband had forbidden her to enter, is a character whose identity has its roots in real people such as the infamous murderer Gilles de Rais. Interest in Gilles de Rais was also increasing at this time due to the publication of Huysmans's *Là-bas* (Tresse et Stock, 1891).

<sup>55</sup> Pascal Pia compares this satire to a twisted amplification of reality: 'la satire, loin de prétendre serrer de près le réel, s'amplifie jusqu'à la plus frénétique parodie et substitue à la société qu'elle bafoue une société dont tous les bourgeois semblent tels qu'en eux-mêmes un jeu de miroirs déformants les eût changés', Pia, p.473.

courtisans, pages, écuyers, barons et chambellans, pas un roi, pas un personnage portant le diadème, tenant le sceptre à la main. Personne ne veut régner. Tout le monde veut être de la cour. (Ibid.)

It is the collective mask that provides their identity rather than their individual characters. Randal is reflecting and interpreting the situation he is observing, but this is a very different fictional transformation to that which we encounter in *Leurs figures*. Whereas Barrès is attempting to reveal his version of reality, to reveal 'leurs figures', the faces of those who committed a crime, Darien is trying to convey a sense of the masks which are worn by those who live inside of and who create the law.

There are undeniable elements of melodrama in *Le Voleur*. Randal is involved in shootings, double-crossings, scorned lovers, the death of a child and sometimes farcical robberies as Darien parodies elements of popular fiction. However, as Redfern points out,<sup>56</sup> the self-aware, ironic nature of the narrative transforms this high drama into a more sophisticated novel.<sup>57</sup> Not only is the reader privy to Randal's observations on politics and society, but also on literature. These observations are inserted into different levels of the text, sometimes as direct narrative comments, sometimes as direct speech to other characters, sometimes as metaphors. Randal seems aware of the inability of the text to satisfactorily convey his experiences.<sup>58</sup> Nowhere is this more evident than at the very end of the novel. It concludes with Randal unable to conclude:

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<sup>56</sup> Redfern, p.154.

<sup>57</sup> Randal occasionally comments on his own style of writing and refers to others, for example: 'Comment est-elle, cette ville-là? Si vous voulez le savoir, faites comme moi; allez-y. Ou bien, lisez un roman naturaliste; vous êtes sûrs d'y trouver quinze pages à la file qui peuvent s'appliquer à Malenvers' (Voleurs, p.465).

<sup>58</sup> Interestingly, there are also small incidents throughout the novel which create a sense of misunderstanding or difficulty in using language. For example, as a child, Randal is unable to express himself fully, due to the restrictions of language: 'je suis heureux. Je ne dis pas que je suis très heureux, car j'ignore le superlatif du bonheur' (Voleurs, p.331).

Je trace les lignes qui termineront ce manuscrit où je raconte, à l'exemple de tant de grands hommes, les aventures de ma vie. J'avoue que je voudrais bien placer une phrase à effet, un mot, un rien, quelque chose de gentil, en avant du point final. Mais cette phrase typique qui donnerait, par le saisissant symbole d'une figure de rhétorique, la conclusion de ce récit, je ne puis pas la trouver. (Voleurs, p.612)

The traditional narrative conclusion, 'à l'exemple de tant de grands hommes', is left unachieved and the identity of Randal is left undefined: 'Conclusion? Je ne serai pas un voleur, c'est certain. [...] L'existence est aussi bête, voyez-vous, aussi vide et aussi illogique pour ceux qui volent que pour ceux qui la gagnent. Que faire de son cœur? que faire de son énergie? que faire de sa force? – et que faire de ce manuscrit?' (Ibid.) The frustration of the individual is ultimately linked to the frustration of the inconclusive text. The representation of financial crime in *Le Voleur* is not simply a critique of bourgeois commercial corruption, but rather part of a wider construction of critical observations on the relationship between the individual and society, which includes challenges to legitimate commerce, politics, law and literature. Ultimately, Randal hesitates between action and inactivity as he writes his novel, but does not know what to do with the manuscript. Just as the text remains open-ended, so too does Randal's fate: he neither receives punishment for his crimes nor reforms his ways. It is unclear if he actually achieves anything in the novel except to learn 'on est toujours volé par quelqu'un...Ah! chienne de vie!...' (p.612). There is an incompleteness to the character of Randal, as his dual identity of thief/writer means he is neither. The linguistic and textual frustrations which are present in the novel, combined with the exaggerated sense of melodrama and self-conscious narrative, form a vision of the individual lost in the crowd.

The challenges presented to authority by both Barrès and Darien in *Leurs figures* and *Le Voleur* hinge on their representations of financial corruption and crime. Even though they approach the question from opposing ideological standpoints, they both synthesise reality and fiction in order to portray a heightened version of the society which they observed around them. Barrès transformed and stylised real events and people to create a fictionalised version of history through which he aimed to represent a truer image of reality as he saw it. This reality was one of an uprooted nation, post-Boulanger, lacking vitality and direction; the crime and corruption the narrator recounts are but a symptom of this degeneration. The authoritative tone of the Barresian narrator, as he interjects and commentates throughout the text, and the amplified versions of real people and events, combine to form a text which aims to convince its readers of its authenticity and also its valid interpretation of history.

Darien, on the other hand, created a self-consciously fictional text which has elements of the real. The representation of the unchecked swindling and theft is a part of a larger challenge to legitimate authority. The melodrama, the farce and the parody constantly remind the reader that this could only be fiction. However, through the self-awareness and self-assessment of the narration combined with the pathos and self-doubting observations of his narrator, Darien created in Randal a character which is more nuanced than any other in *Le Voleur* and certainly more convincing than any which appear in *Leurs figures*. Darien's use of paratextual material to create doubt about the provenance of the text and the reality of the narrator (whose identity as thief/writer is blurred with that of the author himself) makes the text a convincing portrayal of the individual who struggles with the



authority that society seems to have over him. This more personal account of this struggle seems a more persuasive rendering of the dynamic between the individual and society than Barrès's novel, which seeks to convince the reader of the authority of the author's version of events (and the validity of his political and ideological agenda) but ultimately leaves the reader doubting the truth of his claims.

## Chapter Six

### National Identity and the Individual: Colette Baudouche and L'Épaulette

The two main strands of research dealing with Barrès's fiction over the past decades have either focused on his status as a 'proto-fascist' or his importance to the nationalist movement. This latter facet of Barrès's career as a politician and writer has been well documented.<sup>1</sup> The most significant and comprehensive of these works to date is Zeev Sternhell's *Maurice Barrès et le nationalisme français*, which deals in depth with the development of Barrès's nationalist beliefs from his early family life through to the years of the First World War. Sternhell divides this development into chronological sections: childhood and youth, Boulangism, socialism, the Dreyfus Affair and conservative nationalism. In particular, the years which followed the Dreyfus affair (the late 1890s and early 1900s) proved to be a very significant period in the development of Barrès's nationalist thought.<sup>2</sup> The political polarising

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<sup>1</sup> P. Auber, 'L'Intelligence des juifs chez Barrès', *Romanic Review*, 51 (1960), pp.192-205; Maurice Barbier, 'Barrès, historien ou poète de la Colline Inspirée?', *Mémoires de l'Académie Nationale de Metz*, 155 (1974), pp.233-245; Borelly, Marie-Thérèse, 'L'Image de l'Alsace-Lorraine à travers les romans de Barrès', *Mémoires de l'Académie nationale de Metz*, 155 (1974), pp.209 - 219; Yves Chiron, *Barrès et la terre* (Sang de la terre, 1987); Jonathan Fishbane, 'From Decadence to Nationalism in the Early Writings of Maurice Barrès', *Nineteenth Century French Studies*, 4, 13 (Summer 1985), pp.266-278; J. Guittou, 'La Religion de la Colline Inspirée', *La Table ronde*, 111 (March 1957); Philippe de Saint Robert, 'Barrès et l'idée de la France', *Nouvelle revue des deux mondes* (January - March 1974), pp.576-583; Zeev Sternhell, 'Le Nationalisme organique de Barrès', in *Les Écrivains et l'Affaire Dreyfus* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1983); Zeev Sternhell, *Maurice Barrès et le nationalisme français* (Complexe, 1985) and many others.

<sup>2</sup> The effect of the Dreyfus Affair on the development of Barrès's nationalist thought is evident if we take a cursory glance at his journalism of the early 1890s. In particular, an article entitled 'La Querelle des Nationalistes et des Cosmopolites', published in *Le Figaro*, July 4 1892, shows a different Barrès to the virulent nationalist of later years: 'Les nationalités n'y font donc pas grand'chose. On peut être du même pays, du même temps, des mêmes mœurs, et se sentir étrangers l'un à l'autre. [...] Vive la France! Elle est parfaite. Mais surtout Vive l'Europe!' It is clear from this extract that Barrès was on the side of the 'cosmopolites' rather than the 'nationalistes'. While this article primarily addressed the position of literature in relation to national identity and is not directly discussing political issues, there is a clear difference between the Barrès who embraced the variety of culture heritages which were influential in the literature produced in France and the Barrès who later

effect of the affair meant that it was during this time that Barrès began to make a name for himself as an important spokesman for nationalist issues rather than socialism or Boulangism.<sup>3</sup>

This crystallisation of Barrès's identity as a nationalist figure was paralleled by his growing status as a writer. By the turn of the century, Barrès was recognised as an important figure in the literary scene in Paris, culminating in 1906 with his entry into the Académie Française; using Bourdieu's terms, the nationalist Barrès was 'institutionally consecrated'. If Barrès's fictional interpretation of Boulangism in *L'Appel au soldat* and *Leurs figures* is an attempt to legitimise this movement as a valid and authoritative political organisation, then how did he represent his nationalism in fictional form? If, by the time he began to fictionalise his nationalist theories, he was an established, respected and legitimised author, how far did Barrès continue to attempt to validate his own political beliefs through creating narratives which directed the reader to agree with his theories?

While Barrès's status as a significant writer of his generation was crystallised through his election to join the ranks of the *immortels*, Darien's exile in London had galvanised his own identity as a difficult and aloof writer. It was as this period in London was drawing to a close (he returned to Paris in 1906) that *L'Épaulette* was finally published. During these years of exile, his views on the military, socialism and nationalism had continued to develop as he collaborated with

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went on in *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme* to vilify Zola for his Italian roots in the light of the Dreyfus Affair.

<sup>3</sup> Sternhell emphasises this polarising effect: 'L'Affaire provoque l'affrontement de deux visions du morales. L'équipée Boulangiste est ramenée à de plus justes proportions par une crise qui remue les consciences et façonne le comportement politique des Français pour plusieurs années', p.247.

other political writers such as Joseph McCabe,<sup>4</sup> addressing such issues as the economic consequences of disarmament and also publishing the novel he wrote in English, *Gottlieb Krumm: made in England*. As Valia Gréau has argued, during this period of Darien's life his views on nationalism were also developing as he addressed the issue directly in the form of *La Belle France*.<sup>5</sup> While this is certainly true, I will argue in this chapter that *L'Épaulette*, which Darien planned and wrote earlier in his career, also addresses this issue of nationalism and identity through its representation of the effect the promotion of nationalist ideology has on the individual.

Darien's approach to nationalist ideology in *L'Épaulette* is an overlooked area of study. This novel has previously been discussed as a text which presents us with another young character who becomes disillusioned with the bourgeois society in which he lives. For example, Bosc's assessment of *L'Épaulette* is as part of a trio of works with *Le Voleur* and *La Belle France* which combine to form a picture of 'le caractère foncièrement antihumain des pouvoirs constitués'.<sup>6</sup> Redfern views this

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<sup>4</sup> During the first decade of the twentieth century, anti-militarism was a central part of Darien's political thought. In 1899, he produced a pamphlet, written in English with Joseph McCabe, entitled *Can We Disarm?* (London: William Heinemann, 1899). In this text Darien and McCabe claim that France's defeat of 1871 has led European nations to increase their military power to avoid a similar outcome. This increase can only be combated through a change in the ruling classes: 'let us examine the question of reduction in France. We have seen that the liberal and capitalistic *bourgeoisie* cannot undo the military system without grave economic disorders, which it will not face. But the clerical party, once triumphant, could easily reduce the national army to a pretorian footing. It has a basis, not in economics, but in ethics and religion', pp.138-9. The other solution to the question of national armaments was the uprising of the lower classes who are the foot-soldiers of the army: 'the wholesale arming of the nations puts an irresistible power in the hands of the discontented "have-nots". It is more than possible that the people will become acutely conscious of this power, on the first occasion of a general mobilization, and it is by no means impossible that they will calmly proceed to a readjustment of social and economic conditions. If that were done, the obstacles to disarmament would entirely disappear', pp.142-3.

<sup>5</sup> Valia Gréau, *Georges Darien et l'anarchisme littéraire* (Editions du Lérot, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> Bosc, p.84.

novel as an investigation into the dismantling of a young man's hope: '*L'Épaulette* is a book of moods; elation, demoralisation, scepticism and pugnacity.'<sup>7</sup> Clearly *L'Épaulette*, despite its title, is not solely an anti-militarist novel, but also a representation of the power of political and social institutions over the individual. This is, of course, a theme we have seen Darien return to again and again: whether he was writing about the family (*Bas les cœurs!*, *Le Voleur*), the army (*Biribi*, *L'Épaulette*), or the education system (*Bas les cœurs!*), he emphasised the oppressive authority such institutions have over the individual and how this is a dehumanising and demoralising process. This leads us to ask the question in this chapter: was his vision of the individual different in *L'Épaulette* because in this novel he addressed the question of nationality? Through the study of this novel, I will explore whether national identity was just another layer of oppressive authority for the exiled Darien, or if there were other facets to his fictional representation of this issue.

### **Nationalism, Propaganda and Fiction**

The fiction created by both Darien and Barrès is, therefore, infused not only with their views of their own status as writers, but also with the individual's status in relation to national identity. For Barrès in particular, national identity (that which signifies and characterises a nation and the individual citizens of that nation) was a key concept in his political theory. The metaphysical collectivity so privileged in his early works developed into a more defined nationalist discourse based on race, the glorification of French culture and history, and the need to reclaim Alsace and

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<sup>7</sup> Redfern, p.110.

Lorraine back from German occupation. Barrès made a name for himself during the years of the Dreyfus Affair as a vehement anti-Dreyfusard, publishing numerous articles attacking the Jewish army officer and those who supported him, proclaiming the nationalist and anti-Semitic cause. This dedication to publicising his nationalist theories in the form of propaganda and apologetics for the cause was a facet of his writing which continued throughout his career; his nationalism may have evolved and changed but his belief in the effectiveness and necessity of publishing written arguments for his beliefs did not.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, in 1902 Barrès published a collection of political essays and articles entitled *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme* which linked together his views on Dreyfus, Panama, Zola and other contemporary writers, Germany, French history and many other topics under the ideological umbrella of his nationalism. I will be referring to this work in this course of this chapter to help identify the different strands of nationalist ideology in his fiction. As we have seen, Barrès consistently used fiction as a medium through which his political and spiritual beliefs are articulated, and his nationalism was also expressed in this way. In particular, the third trilogy of his career, *Les Bastions de l'Est*, focused on the question of the reaction of French nationalists to the loss of Alsace and Lorraine which had been in German possession since 1870. This trilogy comprises *Au Service*

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<sup>8</sup> These articles began with his work on *Le Courrier de l'Est* from 1889 in support of Boulangism, (such as 'Le Juif dans l'Est', *Le Courrier de l'Est*, 14 July 1889 and 'L'Opportunisme, parti des Juifs', 21 July 1889), and carried on throughout his career. *La Cocarde* ran such articles as 'Un Français et un stagiaire', 23 October 1894, and 'Evolution nationaliste et contre la guerre', 25 October, between 1894 and 1895. At the turn of the century, Barrès was publishing articles which dealt with his combination of socialism and nationalism in *La Patrie*, *Le Gaulois*, *Le Figaro* and others such as 'La Sagesse de l'Est', *La Patrie*, 10 October 1902 and 'Socialisme et nationalisme', *La Patrie*, 27 February 1903. During and after World War I, Barrès turned his attention to the possibility of enlarging France's territory along the Rhine in such articles as 'Le Génie français sur le Rhin', *L'Echo de Paris*, 5 May, 1915 and 'La Tâche de la France sur le Rhin', *La Revue de Genève*, 19 January, 1922.

*de l'Allemagne* (1905), *Colette Baudoche* (1909) and *Le Génie du Rhin* (1921). The first part recounts the experiences of a dignified young soldier from Alsace who endures his military service in the German army and is based on the life of an acquaintance of Barrès, Dr. Pierre Bucher.<sup>9</sup> The second is the story of a young woman from Metz who heroically renounces her love for a German. The third is not a novel, but rather a collection of essays, which seems to sit uneasily with the pattern of Barrès's previous two trilogies, *Le Culte du Moi* and *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale*, in which the author constructed a continuous narrative between the parts of the collective work. In *Les Bastions de l'Est*, the first two narratives are independent of each other in the sense that they can be read separately and do not have overlapping characters. However, they are linked by the shared themes of cultural defence of Alsace and Lorraine and of the threat of German cultural influence on French national identity. The third part of the trilogy, which significantly appeared after the end of World War I and the return of the disputed territories to France, was to promote the further annexation of territory on the west bank of the Rhine. If *Au Service de l'Allemagne* was his fictional representation of Alsace and *Colette Baudoche* was the embodiment of Lorraine, then *Le Génie du Rhin* was a piece of propaganda which put across Barrès's hopes for a third region which could come under French rule.

I will concentrate on *Colette Baudoche* in this chapter for several reasons. It is in his depiction of the disputed regions of Alsace and Lorraine that we find

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<sup>9</sup> After finishing his military service in the German army, Bucher, with encouragement from Barrès, became one of the leading defenders of French cultural traditions in Alsace. Bucher established *La Revue alsacienne illustrée* and the Musée alsacien.

Barrès's nationalism at its most potent and focused; this is particularly evident in his narrative which concerns his home region, Lorraine. Also, the defeat of 1870 and France's ensuing heightened rivalry with Germany, which play such important roles in the novel, cast a long shadow and colour much of French nationalist thought during this period.<sup>10</sup> It was a popular image used in art and literature. In the years which followed the defeat of 1870, the sentiment of *revanche* concerning the loss of Alsace and Lorraine was often represented by artists or writers as the urge to recover abandoned children. The lost provinces appeared as children who were wandering (as in the case of the two boys featured in Bruno's school book *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants*, which appeared in 1877), or alone and waiting (as in the portrait of a lone girl dressed in provincial costume by Jean-Jacques Henner called *Elle attend*).<sup>11</sup>

If the popular and sentimental image of the occupied territories was of lost children or families separated by borders, then the intellectualised version of this metaphor was that of the *patrie* or fatherland which was divided. According to Pierre Sorlin, there was a change in the usage of the term *patrie* between 1870 and 1910, indicative of the increase in popularity of nationalism and patriotism. Basing his

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<sup>10</sup> Many of the leading nationalist figures of this period were marked by their experiences of the Franco-Prussian War. For example, Paul Déroulède was much affected by his experience of the war and began to write poetry based on this time, publishing the popular collection *Les Chants du soldat* in 1872. Although his poetry was by no means innovative, its reception spurred him on to greater things; La Ligue des Patriotes was founded in May 1882 and Déroulède remained an important figure in the nationalist movement until his death in 1913. Bertrand Joly goes as far as to entitle his biography of the campaigner *Déroulède: L'Inventeur du nationalisme* (Perrin, 1998). Other important nationalist writers and activists such as Charles Péguy, Maurras and Paul Adam were also influenced in a similar way by the 1870 defeat.

<sup>11</sup> For more details see Michael Burns, 'Families and fatherlands: the lost provinces and the case of Captain Dreyfus', *Nations and Nationalism in France from Boulangism to the Great War 1889 – 1918*, ed. Robert Tombs (London: Harper Collins, 1991), pp.50-62.



work on statistical research of the frequency of the usage of printed words,<sup>12</sup> Sorlin concludes that after the turn of the century the use of *patrie*, and vocables connected with it such as *patriote*, began to increase whereas as the use of *nation*, and connected terms such as *nationaliste*, continued to decline.<sup>13</sup> This, he claims, had political reasons behind it: if the *patrie* family of words were in common usage (in linguistic terms 'basic French'), then the use of the *nation* family denoted a more specific political usage. Sorlin concludes that the use of the term *nationaliste* by writers such as Barrès, Adam Déroulède or Drumont in the late 1890s and early 1900s was a means of transforming popularly understood concepts, the *patrie* and *patriote*, into more particularised language that could be identified with a certain brand of politics. There was a differentiation which existed, therefore, in the language of nationalism during this period. The popular appeal of the *patrie* family of words tapped into all the images of children in national or regional costume, images of typified French landscape, maps of France which were churned out by the growing postcard and print industry of the time.<sup>14</sup> The *nation* family of words related back to a more intellectual tradition of philosophy and political economy of the generations of 1848 and 1870, of Saint-Simon, Michelet and later of Taine and

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<sup>12</sup> Pierre Sorlin, 'Words and Images of Nationhood', *Nations and Nationalism in France from Boulangism to the Great War 1889 – 1918*, ed. by Robert Tombs (London: Harper Collins, 1991), pp.74 – 88. Sorlin bases his research on the findings of the *Trésor du langage français* as summated by Etienne Brunet, *Le Vocabulaire français de 1789 à nos jours d'après les données du Trésor de la langue française*, 3 vols, (Slatkine, 1981) and Alphonse Juillard, Dorothy Brodin, Catherine Davidovitch, *Frequency Dictionary of French Words* (Mouton, 1970).

<sup>13</sup> Using Barrès as an example of this trend, Sorlin suggests: 'From the beginning we are faced with a political inconsistency: the nationalists gather around a label, *nationalisme*, which is not easily understood, and are therefore bound to have recourse to other, more familiar words, such as *patrie*. "Pour nous la patrie c'est le sol et les ancêtres, c'est la terre de nos morts": it is not by chance that Barrès, aiming to evoke the *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme* (1902) shifted towards *patrie* which is quickly described thanks to concrete, palpable vocables pertaining to basic French.', pp.77-78

<sup>14</sup> See Sorlin, pp.78-79.

Renan. In *Colette Baudoche*, Barrès attempted to reshape such ideological discourse into a piece of fiction. We will now examine how he combined nationalist ideology and narrative and the effectiveness of Barrès's attempts to convince the reader of his beliefs.

The opening scenes of the text give the reader a topographical survey of the town of Metz. The narrator acts as our guide, pointing out landmarks and places of interest as if the reader were a visitor to the town. Although this technique of geographically placing the reader in the context of the novel was commonly used in the opening to many realist and naturalist texts, Barrès's description of the town's streets and buildings demonstrates his technique of incorporating nationalist rhetoric into a fictional narrative. In this section the narrator takes the reader through the part of the town where the presence of the Germans is beginning to be felt. Here Barrès is attempting to juxtapose the physical evidence of German culture with that of France.

On reprend pied, on respire, sitôt franchie la ligne des anciens remparts. Je ne dis pas que ces maisons petites, très usagées, avec leurs volets commodes et parfois des balcons en fer forgé, soient belles, mais elles ne font pas rire d'elles. De simples gens ont construit ces demeures à leur images, et voulant vivre paisiblement une vie messine, ils n'ont pas eu souci de chercher des modèles dans tous les siècles et par tous les climats. Voyez, au pied de l'Esplanade, comme les honnêtes bâtiments de l'ancienne poudrerie, recouverts de grands arbres et baignés par la Moselle, sont harmonieux, aimables. Tant de mesure et de repos semble pauvre aux esthéticiens allemands. Ce pays était épuré, décanté, je voudrais dire spiritualisé; ils le troublent, le surchargent, l'encombrent, ils y versent une lie. Le faite des maisons demeure encore français, mais peu à peu le rez-de-chaussée, les magasins se germanisent. A tout instant, on voit racler une façade, la jeter bas, puis appliquer sur la pauvre bâtisse éventrée une armature de fer, avec de grandes glaces où, le soir, de lampes électriques inonderont d'aveuglantes clartés des montagnes de cigares. L'ennui teuton commence à posséder Metz. Et pis que l'ennui, cette odeur avilissante de buffet, de bière aigrie, de laine mouillée et de pipe refroidie (Colette, pp.11-13).

The immediate difference between this text and earlier works is the use of the first-person present-tense narration. Yet this is not the intimate, immediate narration that we have witnessed in Darien's works. The significant difference between Barrès's

approach to this narrative technique and that of Darien is that Barrès does not sustain it. This style of narration is only used in certain sections of the text, when the narrator seeks to describe the town or countryside (as is the case in the above sections), or at points where the narrator wants to add his own observations and opinions to the events he is describing. Whereas Darien used the first person to produce immediacy, pathos and humour in the text, in *Colette Baudoche* Barrès's narration still has the directing, preaching tone of his earlier works, symptomatic of his *roman à thèse* mode of writing, but this has been modified to create a text which is presented as a parable of nationalism.

This passage exhibits the parabolic nature of the text through the manner in which the town's houses and streets are transformed into metaphors for the German occupation of the region. The symbolic nature of the town is introduced in an explicit manner, '[d]e simples gens ont construit ces demeures à leur image', which is typical of the sometimes clumsy inventions of the narrator in Barrèsian fiction. The narrator not only transforms these houses into symbols of the difference in culture between France and Germany, but explicitly directs the reader to view them as such tropes. The juxtaposition of German architectural style, which the narrator identifies as cumbersome and vulgar, with that of the French, which is identified as simple and honest, is part of a technique of comparison which is used throughout the novel. National identity in *Colette Baudoche* is distilled into symbolic examples of style and culture such as etiquette, manners, dress and, in this case, architecture. Consistently, the narrator transforms everyday objects and buildings into metaphors for the conflict between French and German culture in the Alsace-Lorraine region.

It is into this transfigured landscape, laden with metaphors and symbols, that the narrator introduces the fictional characters of the text. Just as the topography of real towns and places is fictionalised and represented in such a way as to serve Barrès's ideological agenda, so too the purely fictional elements of plot and character are always underpinned with his sense of national identity. This is particularly in evidence in the passage below, which includes the juncture at which the narrator's tour around Metz links into the main plot of the novel, that of the relationship between Colette and Asmus. This is signalled by a change into the past tense:

Un jour que je me prêtais à ces influences du vieux Metz, le long de la Moselle, et que je suivais le quai Félix-Maréchal, je vis venir, le nez en l'air et cherchant, semblait-il, un logement à louer, un grand et vigoureux jeune Allemand. L'Allemand classique, coiffé d'un feutre verdâtre, et vêtu ou plutôt matelassé d'une redingote universitaire. [...] Personne ne le regardait. Il n'éveillait ni l'instinct comique, ni l'hostilité. Il paraissait vraiment banal: un Prussien de plus arrivait, une goutte d'eau dans ce déluge. (Colette, pp.15-16)

Here we have the arrival of Asmus into Metz as a personification of the insidious invasion of German style and culture into the town. Just as the buildings from the earlier passage are described as clumsy and vulgar, so Asmus is portrayed as large and badly dressed. Just as the narrator is drawing our attention to the ridiculous elements of Asmus's appearance, he then goes on to claim no-one else reacts to the young Prussian in this way, although he directs the reader to do so. The introduction of the character of Asmus continues the narrator's parable of national identity, transforming him into another symbol: the personification of German culture.

The symbolic use of clothing to represent the differences in national identity is also exploited by Barrès later in the novel to convey the civilising effect of Colette on Asmus. As the two characters grow closer, so the narrator uses Asmus to admire

Colette's natural style and elegance. The young German wears a new outfit to please

Colette and then goes on to admire her new dress:

Ce soir-là, Mademoiselle Colette venait de terminer sa robe et son corsage. Il [Asmus] demanda la permission de les prendre avec sa grosse main, et il riait. Il était sensible à la légèreté et à l'amabilité de ses vêtements considérés en eux-mêmes. Ce sont des objets précieux, respectables et délicats, le fruit d'une aimable industrie et consacrés par leur usage, quelque chose de familier et devant quoi, pourtant, il faut s'incliner. De toutes ses forces pédantes, il admirait cette jeune fille (pareille à toutes les Messines) et qui savait (comme elles toutes) exécuter un chef-d'œuvre de goût, de sobriété...

- Quelle ceinture me conseillez-vous de mettre là-dessus, Monsieur Asmus?

- Du rouge ou du jaune peut-être.

Elle partit d'un éclat de rire.

- Du rouge ou du jaune sur du mauve! Mais non, Monsieur le docteur; je mettrai une ceinture mauve comme les fleurs du tissu.

Il reconnut, en rougissant un peu, que dans son pays, on n'avait pas le sens des couleurs.

(Colette, pp.183-184)

This scene is typical of Barrès's alignment of French national identity with that of the young, elegant woman and German national identity with that of the clumsy, pedantic man. The portrayal of the instinctive style of Colette, which is 'pareille à toutes les Messines', is another facet of the sense of aesthetics which Barrès claims is part of the French national make-up. The effect of privileging the symbolic aspects of these characters is that they do not have any sense of depth or authenticity. In attempting to construct convincing arguments for his belief in the conflict between French and German aesthetics, Barrès reduced his characters to caricatures.

By personifying nationalist rhetoric in his characters, he produces stereotypes rather than believable characters. Barrès's distinction between the German and French sense of aesthetics is evident in his non-fictional works also, particularly in *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme*,<sup>15</sup> but his fictional portrayal distils the difference

<sup>15</sup> Barrès also explored this gender difference between the identities of France and Germany in *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme*: 'Les Allemands, qui brûlèrent et rebâtirent avec magnificence des quartiers de Strasbourg, n'ont ici rien modifié. Metz, une fois franchis les travaux qui l'enserrent,

into scenes which operate less as devices which develop the plot or characters, than as a discussion of this facet of Barrès's ideology. In the passage above, the narrator clearly links the natures of both Colette and Asmus to the wider context of their national identities: Colette's aptitude for style and design is not indicative of her particular character but she is 'pareille à toutes les Messines'; Asmus is embarrassed not by his own faulty sense of colour, but rather by that of his country.

### Race and Narrative

This inherent weakness in Barrès's attempt to fictionalise national identity effectively is compounded by his return to a narrative technique which was present in his early works. *Colette* is a return to the overarching themes of race and nationality, with which Barrès was concerned through much of his career, and which are made explicit in the above passage: national identity and the invasion of Alsace-Lorraine. As we have seen, many of his novels, such as *Les Déracinés*, deal with the destruction of regional or national culture through education, the press or politics; the roots from which the characters are separated are those of national or regional cultural heritage. *Colette* signals a development of themes which Barrès first addressed in *Le Culte du moi* trilogy (1888-1891) and there is also a link between the narrative technique of the earlier novels and *Colette*. Particularly in *Un Homme*

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apparaît dans sa servitude identique à elle-même. Elle émeut d'autant plus, esclave qui garde les traits et l'allure que ses amis et ses fils aimaient chez la femme libre. [...] Les femmes de Metz touchent par une délicatesse, une douceur infinie, plutôt que par la beauté. Leur image, quand elles parcourent les rues étroites, pareilles aux corridors d'une maison de famille, s'harmonise au sentiment que communique toute cette Lorraine opprimée et fidèle.' (Œuvre V, p.256) In this passage there is the combination, as in *Colette Baudoche*, of the sense of aesthetics and gender difference. Germany is the battering ram which demolishes Strasbourg, whereas France is embodied in Metz and its female inhabitants, who are faithful in their dress, style and appearance to French national identity.

*libre* (1889) Barrès structured large sections of his narrative almost as an instruction manual or itinerary of how Philippe attempts to live as a man free from external corruption, ('installation', 'examens de conscience', 'meditations', 'applications' and 'oraisons'). Included in such sections of narrative are ideological statements and arguments which are addressed directly from author to reader. In such passages, the author appears to be by-passing basic techniques of fiction writing (character, plot) through which the structure of the narrative is created and given meaning and purpose, and transforming the text into a series of ideologically driven didactic arguments which set out to convince the reader of their validity, but which ultimately fail. This transformation of the text into ideological discussion is also evident in *Colette Baudouche*. Not only are characters used to signify national identity and the topography of the novel used as a metaphor of the conflict between French and German cultures, but the fabric of the narration itself is transformed from a report of past or imagined events into a series of points which form an argument between Asmus and a character only referred to as 'Le Pangermaniste'.<sup>16</sup>

The opposing viewpoints of these men are presented in an exchange of ideas which is depicted, not as a natural dialogue between two established characters, but rather a staged confrontation.

M.ASMUS:

Je suis un bon garçon et je ne veux pas détruire les cerveaux de petits Lorrains. [...]

LE PANGERMANISTE:

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<sup>16</sup> The idea of the German nation existing as a body which crossed national boundaries was important to much of German nationalist thought throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, from the notion of the *Volk* of the 1830s through to the invasion of neighbouring territories by the Third Reich in the late 1930s. During the period Barrès was writing, a key text promoting a certain brand of pangermanism was Julius Langbehn's *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, (*Rembrandt as Educator*), which was published in 1890, and in which Langbehn discussed his belief that German cultural traditions were best preserved in *Niederdeutschland*, that is north-west Germany and the Low Countries.

Si messieurs les Lorrains se trouvent fanés par les vérités allemandes, qu'ils s'en aillent donc en France où l'agriculture manque de bras, comme ils disent (Colette, pp.161-170).

Indeed, Barrès even does away with any punctuation which normally implies the use of direct speech. Here each paragraph of argument is simply headed by the name of the character in capital letters, almost like the text of a play. It is in this section of the text that Barrès makes clear the difference between the ideas Asmus has about the connection between Lorraine and France and the beliefs of the Pangermanist who supports Germany's occupation of the annexed regions. Not only is the presentation of these ideas stripped of any of the narrative conventions associated with reported dialogue, but the character construction which occurs in passages such as these produces typified, symbolic characters: Asmus is presented as a typical German attracted to French culture; the Pangermaniste is merely a symbolic figure who is defined solely by his nationalism.

Barrès also inserts references into the dialogue that link up with larger metaphors for national identity which are evident in *Colette Baudoche*. The Pangermanist makes use of the gender metaphor to demonstrate his belief in the differences between German and French national identity:

Leur langue est claire, parce qu'ils ne vont jamais au fond des choses; leur cuisine excite les sens; la politesse de leurs salons n'est que le manteau de la débauche. Méfions-nous plutôt de ce qui subsiste ici de cette fameuse culture française: elle est un poison pour nos vertus mâles. Si nous n'y prenons garde, ce pays risque de nous énerver (Colette, p.169).

Here there are many references to conflicts between French and German style that the narrator has already been at pains to point out: cookery, manners, and language. The Pangermanist frames these differences within the metaphor of gender difference, 'elle est poison pour nos vertus mâles', which is played out in a larger



sense in the novel through the relationship between Colette and Asmus.<sup>17</sup> The significance of these passages is that Barrès did not leave his discussion of national identity to characterisation or even to the metaphors which the reader finds in the plot which represent cultural differences, but instead he believed it was necessary to go one step further and insert raw ideological discussion into the text. By doing so, the characters, in particular Asmus, become symbolic vehicles for nationalist ideology clothed in the typified mannerisms, appearances and rhetoric of their nation.

National and racial typification was not new to Barrès's writing or his politics. His comments in *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme* concerning Dreyfus and Zola shed some more light on this process of typification. In an article first published in *Le Journal*, 4 October 1898, Barrès discussed the claim of many Dreyfusards that Alfred Dreyfus had become a symbol, which he believed was their way of avoiding Dreyfus's assumed guilt.<sup>18</sup> It is interesting that in 1903, four years after Dreyfus had accepted an official pardon, Barrès too was classifying the officer

<sup>17</sup> The use of gender to denote national and racial identity is a technique which Barrès also used in *Le Culte du moi* trilogy. In *Le Jardin de Bérénice* a young girl is used to embody her race, as Fishbane concludes in 'From Decadence to Nationalism in the Early Writings of Maurice Barrès,' *Nineteenth Century French Studies*, no. 4, vol.13, (1985), p.275: 'The unconscious racial *milieu* is the life source. This is precisely what Bérénice symbolises.' Barrès used gender for its symbolic value in a similar way in which he used race. As Bram Dijkstra argues, Barrès's reference to the image of Leda and the swan in his 1894 work, *Du sang, de la volupté et de la mort*, demonstrates his view of the biological and cultural destiny of woman: to submit to the authority and power of man. This assessment would certainly seem to resonate with Barrès's admiration of those masculine symbols of national power (such as Napoleon) whom he admired because of their energy, vitality and forcefulness. Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: fantasies of feminine evil in fin-de-siècle culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.316.

<sup>18</sup> See *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme*, (Œuvre V, pp.42-46). In this article Barrès accuses Dreyfus's supporters of being uninterested in the judicial process: 'Que leur homme soit innocent ou coupable, qu'en savent-ils? Leur raison, qui ne possède pas les éléments pour apprécier ce fait, n'a qu'à recueillir la vérité judiciaire. Mais il faut qu'ils transforment un fait d'ordre judiciaire en question sociale. Pourquoi? Pour faire triompher diverses préoccupations qui leur tiennent à cœur et qui n'ont rien à voir avec le problème proposé aux juges du conseil de guerre. Aussi disent-ils que Dreyfus est un symbole' p.45.

at the centre of the affair as a type apart from humanity: 'Du commencement à la fin Dreyfus est resté un être énigmatique, une sorte d'animal à sang froid, très différent à nous, imperméable à toutes les excitations dont nous affectent notre terre, nos ancêtres, notre drapeau, le mot «honneur»' (Cahiers, p.191).<sup>19</sup>

Barrès not only constructed fictional characters as representative images of their nationalities, but this was a process which was central to his theories on nationality and race and which he applied to real people. Just as he believed he was a product of Lorraine, so too was Dreyfus a product of his race and representative of it. In *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme*, this process is applied to one of the leading lights of the Dreyfusard movement:

M. Zola était prédestiné pour le Dreyfusisme. Il obéit à de profondes nécessités intérieures. Qu'est-ce que M. Émile Zola? Je le regarde à ses racines: cet homme n'est pas un Français. [...] Il se prétend bon Français; je ne fais pas le procès de ses prétentions, ni même de ses intentions. Je reconnais que son Dreyfusisme est le produit de sa sincérité. Mais je dis à cette sincérité: il y a une frontière entre vous et moi. Quelle frontière? Les Alpes (Œuvre V, p.52).

Here we see the creation of what David Carroll calls 'cultural and racial typologies'.<sup>20</sup> It is important to note that this Barrèsian process of racial and national typification was not confined to his fictional works, but was more significantly deployed in Barrès's journalism and political works. When used in a fictional text, such a process could be identified as symbolic representation, (just as Colette

<sup>19</sup> Barrès concluded from his discussion of Dreyfus as a typical Jew that 'Dreyfus a commis le crime' (ibid.). He is equally unrepentant of his anti-Dreyfusard position in his memoirs: 'Quand vint l'Affaire Dreyfus, mon père était mort. Je crois que tout ce que j'ai dit à cette heure était de chez-nous', Cahiers, p.24.

<sup>20</sup> David Carroll, *French Literary Fascism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p.27. Carroll argues that Barrès's aestheticised version of the Self, which was established in his earlier works, presented a powerful image of the forces and energies in the Self. He goes on to conclude that this mythologized, totalised representation of the Self implied a belief that the individual was greater than its solitary identity. The *Moi* was inherently connected with its culture heritage and national identity, which in turn endowed it with power and significance: 'It [the Self] constitutes an absolute, unrestrained culturalist version of the philosophy of the subject, one willing – at least in principle – to go to any lengths to realise what is seen as the unbounded potential of the Self, its power to be itself and the world at the same time, to be total if not totalitarian', p. 41.

represents what is positive about France), or perhaps personification (at times, Asmus could be said to embody the negative aspects of German culture), but when such narrative techniques are used in the description of real people and events, the writer is no longer typifying a character for dramatic or thematic effect, but is instead making bold political claims.

Indeed, as we have seen, Barrès also applied this racial typification to Dreyfus in describing him in animalistic terms, as a different sort of being to Frenchmen. If Dreyfus and Zola (and other Dreyfusards and *intellectuels*) were the national traitors, racially destined to betray France, then there were also figures who he believed typified positive aspects of French national identity. Just as in *Les Déracinés* when the uprooted boys gather around the tomb of Napoleon, or in *Un Homme libre* when Philippe canonises and meditates upon Saint-Simon and others, or in the heavily symbolic descriptions of Boulanger in *L'Appel au soldat*, Barrès also used certain individuals in *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme* to highlight aspects of French national identity. In particular, he devoted a large section of the text to Paul Déroulède, who he believed was a significant leader of the nationalist movement.<sup>21</sup> Barrès's treatment of Déroulède in this context is parallel in some

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<sup>21</sup> Barrès's appraisal of Déroulède renders the leader of the Ligue des Patriotes as a hero of the cause who not only embodies that which Barrès believed was noble about the nationalist movement, but also that which was worthy and positive about France itself: 'Il y a des hommes de qui la grandeur ne subsiste que si nul ne la soumet à l'analyse. Déroulède gagne tout à être rendu intelligible par un examen minutieux. L'histoire de sa pensée et le fait qu'à plusieurs reprises elle reçut l'assentiment de la nation entière (se souvenir du duel avec Clemenceau en 1893 et des jours qui précédèrent l'acte de la place de la Nation) sont un réconfort pour un Français. On doute parfois de notre esprit de conduite nationale, on cherche sur quels intérêts raisonnables peut se faire notre unité. Déroulède s'est fait aimer non par la flatterie démagogique, mais en montrant une figure de chef; il s'est fait entendre de tous en parlant de l'intérêt national' (*Œuvre V*, pp.247-8). Here we see Barrès using terms that refer to unity of national feeling and thought which he believed was found in Déroulède. Particular events, such as the duel with Clemenceau, heightened this sense of unity, according to Barrès, making Déroulède one in a succession of men of energy and action which Barrès claimed embodied France at its best.

respects to his description of Victor Hugo's funeral in *Les Déracinés*. As Sturel observes the procession of the cortege through the streets, the narrator fills his description with terms which ring of national unity and identity:

derrière l'humble corbillard marchaient des jardins de fleurs et les pouvoirs cabotinants de la Nation et puis la Nation elle-même, orgueilleuse et naïve, touchante et ridicule, mais si sûre de servir l'idéal! Notre fleuve français coula ainsi de midi à six heures [...] Qu'un tel phénomène d'union dans l'enthousiasme, puissant comme les plus grandes scènes de la nature, ait été déterminé pour remercier un poète-prophète, un vieil homme qui par ses utopies exaltait les cœurs, voilà qui doit susciter les plus ardentes espérances des amis de la France (Œuvre III, pp.342-3).

The veneration of Hugo in this passage goes beyond admiration of his work or his politics and transforms him into a national symbol, a figurehead behind whom the 'fleuve français' can gather. David Carroll points out that this portrayal of Hugo is largely dependant on the writer's role as a poet, as it is through his poetic manipulation of words that the masses can be inspired to unity and a return to their cultural and spiritual origins.<sup>22</sup> Hugo, Déroulède and many others form part of a series of symbolic figures who are present both in Barrès's fictional representation of his nationalist beliefs and in his non-fictional writing.

### Mythologizing National Identity

In *Colette Baudouche*, however, there is not a fictional portrayal of a particular figure such as Hugo or Boulanger. The above passage of description from *Les Déracinés*

<sup>22</sup> David Carroll emphasises the importance of words in the veneration of Hugo: 'As in the case of Napoleon, the Hugo who is a "mystical leader" and a principle of unity is an idealized figure distanced from his romantic literary interests and republican political activities. The ideal that the masses idolize is an abstract formalist ideal. In loving Hugo, the masses love themselves; they love the figures and types that are the very substance of their ideal (fictional) cultural deign as French men and women; they love especially *the words* that constitute their being [...] The people of Paris become a collective unity, but one defined linguistically, poetically, and culturally, not biologically; that is, one whose soul and mind are filled with the same words, rather than one whose body is filled with the "same blood". [...] The role of the national poet, of the master of French words, then, is to facilitate the return to the origin, to the moment before division when perfect communion was a natural state', *French Literary Fascism*, pp. 39-40.

refers to a documented event which was witnessed by thousands on the streets of Paris. The parallel description in *Colette Baudoche* is not a portrayal of a real event, but is rather a fictional representation of a typical event. The description of the memorial ceremony for the French dead of the Franco-Prussian War does not claim to be a piece of reportage, but is instead the climax of the symbolic conflict between nations which has been taking place throughout the novel.

In this scene, there are echoes of the organic unity of the crowd which Barrès infused into his description of Hugo's funeral in *Les Déracinés*. It is clear that Barrès believed communal ceremonies and symbolic events were fundamental to the formation and maintenance of community and national feeling. In *Colette Baudoche*, the significance of the ceremony is heightened by the German occupation of the town. Also infused into this mixture of national unity and separation is the element of religion and spiritual experience; the service takes place in the cathedral and Barrès mixes many religious and national symbols and sentiments.

Pour ces Messins, depuis trente-sept ans, il n'est pas de meilleur plaisir que de dresser les monuments du souvenir sur tous les plateaux du pays, ni de souci plus jaloux que de protéger leur cathédrale. Chacun d'eux recueille les moindres épaves de champs de bataille, s'attache à l'entretien des ossuaires, surveille avec inquiétude les entreprises, les menées des vainqueurs protestants autour de la vieille basilique, et veut qu'elle demeure dédiée au dieu des Messins. Voilà leur piété, voilà leur fierté! (Colette, pp.241-242).

This passage clearly demonstrates the combination of nationalist and religious symbolic language. There are layers of symbols here which Barrès combined to form a transforming image of national identity and conflict. Through this transformation, Metz cathedral becomes the ultimate monument to memory and territory which needs to be defended against the invading Protestants. Firstly, there are the inhabitants of Metz operating as a united body; they are simply referred to as 'ces Messins' for much of this section of the text. Their united purpose is centred

around the protection of their cultural territory: the cathedral. We have the language of war ('les épaves de champs des batailles'), images of economic competition ('[c]hacun d'eux [...] surveille avec inquiétude les entreprises'), and religious conflict ('les menées des vainqueurs protestants autour de la vieille basilique, et veut qu'elle demeure dédiée au dieu des Messins.')

It is important to note that this is not a purely religious conflict between Protestant and Catholic, but religion is rather an element in the identity of the Metz inhabitants which differentiates them from the Germans. It is not in defence of the Pope that they cling to their cathedral, but rather in defence of the 'dieu des Messins'. This is the god of the people of Metz, a symbol of their territory and identity which is expressed as a form of divinity, rather than the God of the Catholic Church.

This injection of religious imagery and atmosphere into the representation of national conflict and identity transforms ancestors and soldiers into martyrs and the cathedral crowd into a spiritually united body of believers in the sanctity of national identity. Barrès goes on to address the readers directly, attempting to include them in the crowd of believers. He points out the importance of such ceremonies:

on les délaisse, mais sous la cendre qui les recouvre, le moindre souffle les ravive. Elles composent peut-être la religion naturelle de notre race, ce qui s'éveille dans la partie mystérieuse de chacun de nous et qui nous réunit, les uns les autres, au choc d'une émotion de douleur ou de joie. Ces nobles revenantes, ces pensées éternelles animent, ce matin, la foule (Colette, p.248).

The unity among the crowd which Barrès attempted to create in the cathedral scene is extended to the reader and the writer through the use of 'nous' and 'nos' in this passage. This is an example of Barrès's attempt to include the reader in the collective identity of the crowd and, by extension, of the nation. The extent of this collectivity is sometimes hard to define, as Barrès occasionally interchanged

references to national identity, racial identity and regional identity. The conflict between French and German culture is played out in the specific context of the occupied region of Lorraine but, in the above passage, there is also a reference to race, 'la religion nationale de notre race', when it is unclear to the reader just to whom the narrator is referring. Does he mean the French people or the people of Lorraine? When taken in the context of Barrès's other writings, especially his opinions on the predestined nature of Dreyfus's 'betrayal' which we have already considered, this mixture of race and nationality seems contradictory. In *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme* Barrès wrote: 'Disons-le une fois pour toutes: il est inexact de parler au sens strict d'une race française. Nous ne sommes point une race, mais une nation; elle continue chaque jour à se faire et sous peine de nous diminuer, de nous anéantir, nous, individus qu'elle encastre, nous devons la protéger.'<sup>23</sup> The nuances of Barrès's theory of race and national identity, as expounded in *Scènes*, are not made clear in his fictional work as the symbols and metaphors of race, culture, nation and religion are mixed together. Zeev Sternhell connects this seeming contradiction to a line of nationalist thought, which includes Michelet, Taine and Renan, that race had both biological and also cultural elements.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, events

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<sup>23</sup> *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme*, p.33. Also, Barrès wrote in his *Cahiers* in 1903 that: 'il y a un type français, un type anglais, un allemand, mais non une race. Les peuples sont des produits de l'histoire. Les races, tout ce qu'on peut mettre sous ce nom, ce sont des produits sociaux,' *Cahiers*, p.182.

<sup>24</sup> Zeev Sternhell, 'The Political Culture of Nationalism', *Nationhood and Nationalism in France: From Boulangism to the Great War 1889-1918*, ed. by Robert Tombs (London: Harper Collins, 1991), pp.22-38. Sternhell connects Barrès's theory of the dual nature of race directly to the ideas of earlier writers: 'There is no real contradiction between these two positions. It was Renan who modified Michelet's distinction between race and nation. In Renan as well as in the following generation [that of Barrès], the word 'race' had two senses: one was physical, ethnic and almost biological; and the other was cultural and historical', p.33. In this way, Sternhell discerns that Barrès

such as the memorial ceremony perform an important function, according to Barrès, in the formation of national racial identity.

This dual nature of Barrès's racial theory is evident in the interaction between Colette and Asmus during this last section of the novel. As we have seen, both characters perform symbolic roles, each representing their nationality and the struggle between the two. The memorial ceremony acts as a catalyst for Colette, which brings her to the decision to refuse Asmus's proposal, just as Barrès believed such cultural events should affect the unity and identity of the participants. This decision transforms Colette into a part of something larger and more significant than herself:

Celle-ci, [Colette] à la chaleur de cette cérémonie, distingue ce qui reposait de plus caché pour elle-même dans son âme. Ce qui s'épanouit sur cette humble tige et au cœur de cette simple fille, c'est le sentiment religieux, avec la nuance proprement locale, c'est la fleur messine. Colette, maintenant, perçoit avec une joyeuse allégresse qu'entre elle et M. Asmus, ce n'est pas une question personnelle, mais une question française. Elle se sent chargée d'une grande dignité, soulevée vers quelque chose de plus vaste, de plus haut et de plus constant que sa modeste personne (Colette, pp.251-252).

Here Barrès builds up layers of symbolism, again mixing religious and nationalist imagery, by using repetition of phrases and a quasi-hyperbolic description of Colette's feelings. Colette is transfigured into a chaste embodiment of France's struggle against the German occupation of Lorraine. The fusion of religious symbols with nationalist imagery brings the construction of Colette's character to its crescendo: she is not merely a girl, or a convincing character, but she is completely absorbed into the ideological symbolism, she becomes an icon representing France.

The culmination of Barrès's nationalist symbolism, which occurs in *Colette Baudouche* through his depiction of the memorial service, is also the culmination of

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held to the theory of racial determinism which was based on a combination of physical factors and



his typification of character and place. The religious ritual involving the stylised representatives of Germany and France, Colette and Asmus, is a mixture of symbols within symbols. Story-telling as a vehicle for ideology is reduced to a plot and characters which have little purpose and life outside of their role as symbols and metaphors for nationalist thought. The production and publication of such fiction is central to the Barrèsian imagination and way of writing. As Philip Ouston observes, the use of the symbolic in place of realistic character construction was Barrès's method of communicating his political message.<sup>25</sup> The conclusion of this story is less about the resolution of the tension between two characters (the reader has not been witness to enough insights into these characters to truly care about them), but more a self-consciously staged resolution to nationalist fable. This is a story with a moral at the end, and that moral is Barrès's belief in national identity.

### **Antimilitarism and Foreign Characters**

So, again, the study of Barrès's fiction returns us to the question of fiction as a vehicle for political ideas, and the effect this has on the construction and potency of the narrative. In the case of his work of nationalist fiction, his method of typified characters, authorial or narrator interjection into the text and a schematic plot seems to be heightened as it deals directly with the issue which is at the core of Barrès's ideology: the expansion of the self into a collective national identity. This process is

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cultural heritage.

<sup>25</sup> 'To convey what he meant by 'the word Lorraine', Barrès normally preferred to draw on such symbols of patriotic self-consciousness as he could find ready-made in the collective imagination of his people. [...] the traditionalistic image of Lorraine incorporated in the greater Fatherland of France, which was the most important contribution to the literature of French nationalism, gains thereby a breadth and substance that distinguishes it from personal fantasy', P. Ouston, *The Imagination of Maurice Barrès* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), p.11.

also at the heart of Georges Darien's work of fiction which deals with the questions of nationality and nationhood. In *L'Épaulette*, as in many of his novels, Darien is concerned with provoking an emotional response in the reader to convey his political message. As we have seen, this results in texts which often have emotional impact and characters which are generally nuanced and believable.

This is certainly true of *L'Épaulette*. Just as in *Bas les cœurs!* the narrator recounts his life as a child and young man. At the opening of the novel, we encounter Jean, a young boy living in Alsace during the Franco-Prussian War and we follow his experiences as he grows up and becomes disillusioned with the glory of the army and France. The canvas of this novel is much larger than other Darien works of fiction such as *Bas les cœurs!*, although both of these works tackle the parallel themes of family disfunction, false patriotism and hypocrisy. In *L'Épaulette* Darien takes Jean from boy to man: while at the start of the novel the narration is similar to the other child-narrators we have encountered in his work, by the end the narrator's voice has altered considerably and has taken on a sceptical and disillusioned tone. However, there are certain issues which provoke Darien's criticism from the outset. From the very beginning of the text, it is clear that Darien is setting out to challenge the patriotism and the respect for the army of the older generation. The opening scene of the novel shows Colonel Gabarrot, an old soldier, telling war stories:

Le colonel Gabarrot racontait de belles histoires. Il disait que les Russes étaient des coquins, que les Prussiens étaient des bandits, et que les Anglais valaient encore moins. Quelquefois, il me montrait sa croix d'officier de la Légion d'honneur qu'il avait gagnée à grands coups de sabre, et qu'il gardait dans une belle boîte noire; si je voudrais en avoir une pareille, quand je serais grand, je n'aurais qu'à tuer beaucoup de Russes, beaucoup de Prussiens et surtout beaucoup d'Anglais (*Voleurs*, p.615).

There are two elements to the above passage which were central to Darien's thinking on the subject of patriotism and national identity. First, typically, there is none of the respect for the army that is so evident in Barrès's writing. *Colette Baudoche* culminates, after all, with a remembrance service for the soldiers who died in the Franco-Prussian War.<sup>26</sup> The opening of Darien's novel immediately challenges this respect for the glory of war and the status of soldiers as defenders of the honour of France. This is achieved through the use of the child's perspective to render the practice of war ridiculous. What Jean, the child, is interested in is not Gabarrot's stories or the old man's opinions, but rather his medal, which comes in a 'belle boîte noire.' The whole act of Gabarrot recounting his war stories is reduced by Jean in the opening sentence into 'les belles histoires'. Indeed, these stories take on a oversimplified and exaggerated air in the voice of the child narrator: 'je n'aurais qu'à tuer beaucoup de Russes, beaucoup de Prussiens et surtout beaucoup d'Anglais'. Whereas in *Biribi* Darien exposed the brutality of the army through intricate descriptions of punishments, in *L'Épaulette* he expanded this attack on the veneration of the military through exposing the superficiality of the army's glorious self-image.

The second element of Darien's ideas about nationality and nationalism which is evident in this passage is his attitude to the stereotypes of national identity. It is clear from the outset of *L'Épaulette* that Darien was critical of attitudes like those of Gabarrot which predestined people to behave as their nationality dictated.

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<sup>26</sup> Barrès's respect for the army and the patriotism of preceding generations is especially evident in the articles which he published in *L'Echo de Paris* during World War I, entitled 'Chroniques de la Grande Guerre', and in his retelling of the wartime experiences of his grandfather, Jean-Baptiste-Auguste Barrès, as a soldier in the Grande Armée, which appeared in 1923.

Again, he uses the perspective of the child to reveal the irrationality of this idea: '[i]l disait que les Russes étaient des coquins, que les Prussiens étaient des bandits, et que les Anglais valaient encore moins.' This is an idea which is directly opposed to that of Barrès's typified view of national identity. The role of foreigners in Darien's writing is very different to their function as *barbares* or invaders in the work of Barrès. They are treated as the voice of the outsider, whether for good or bad, and are equally capable of speaking sense and reason as of acting as a swindler or a con artist. Darien's novel *Gottlieb Krumm*, which he wrote in English and published in London in 1904, depicts a family of Germans living in London who make their living through fraud, blackmail, prostitution and many other criminal activities.<sup>27</sup> It is written from the perspective of Gottlieb himself as he pokes fun at their victims and gets increasingly involved with the criminal underworld of London. The English of the text is, at times, difficult to read and full of clumsy metaphors or idioms. These linguistic difficulties form just one of many layers of exile and separation which exist in this text: the author was in exile in London when the text was written; he wrote it in a language which was foreign to him; it was published first in a foreign country, addressed to foreign readers; the main character is an immigrant, who is also narrating in a foreign tongue. Darien mixes linguistic and cultural differences with economic deviation; Gottlieb is a national alien, but he is also an individual who operates outside of legitimate financial structures.<sup>28</sup> His identity as a

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<sup>27</sup> Darien, *Gottlieb Krumm, made in England* (London: R.A. Everett & Co, 1904).

<sup>28</sup> Redfern links this criminal activity not with Gottlieb's nationality, but rather with his role in the economic structure of the bourgeois society of which he was a part: 'If the traditional role of the bourgeois is to act as a middleman, then Gottlieb Krumm represents a deviant version: fence, swindler, confidence-man', p.201.

foreigner reinforces this role as an outsider, but it is the love of money and the pursuit of wealth at all costs (which Darien believed to be a most bourgeois characteristic) that drive him and his family into crime. In *Gottlieb Krumm*, Darien was not attempting to vilify German immigrants but rather attempting to expose the fraud and deception he believed were happening in London at that time and revealing the society which made such crime possible.

In *L'Épaulette* we see another presentation of German characters, which demonstrates Darien's intention to create a nuanced picture of foreigners. In the second chapter of this text we are introduced to two contrasting foreign figures, that of Uncle Karl and Raubvogel. While Jean's Uncle Karl, who is an officer in the Prussian army, has definite German characteristics, he is also presented in a positive light through the eyes of the child: '[u]n homme droit, sec, dont les yeux ont un regard direct et franc, et dont la voix claire donne aux phrases françaises une précision particulière. J'ai peu vu mon oncle jusqu'ici, mais je me sens une grande affection pour lui' (*Voleurs*, p.641). Whereas Barrès presented Asmus using such terms as 'pédant' or describing his manners as vulgar, Darien sees the Prussian character as direct and particular. Karl's opinions about the war are relayed by Jean in a simple fashion which lends them a logic and rationality:

[I]e conflit est sur le point de se terminer, fatalement; mon oncle, quelquefois, en donne les raisons. Il dit que la désorganisation de l'armée française est à son comble; qu'elle ne lutte plus que pour le triomphe et l'établissement définitif des cabotins sanguinaires qui ont usurpé le pouvoir au 4 septembre; qu'elle obéit aux ordres supérieurs d'un ministre de la Guerre civile, ingénieur douteux qui n'a de génie que pour l'intrigue [...] Il ajoute qu'il est vraiment pitoyable de voir les forces vives d'un grand pays comme la France sacrifiées à l'ambition stérile de politiciens de bas étage (*Voleurs*, p.688).

Compared to the sensationalist press reports in the newspapers that Jean's father reads and the false patriotism of Raubvogel or the exaggerated politics of M.

Freeman, the Englishman who sometimes acts more like a Frenchman than those who surround him, the opinions of Karl make a lot of sense and the simple rationality of the child Jean recognises this. As Walter Redfern concludes: 'the truth in this novel comes mostly from Germany.'<sup>29</sup> The Prussian root to Jean's family is highly significant, as not only does it give the reader a more positive impression of a Prussian, the supposed enemy, but it also places Jean's family origins, and consequently their identity, outside of France. The war is described not only from the perspective of the French, but also from the Prussian, and therefore the enemy is humanised. In comparison with the construction of the German characters in *Colette Baudouche*, Karl is a much more rounded character, even though he does not feature extensively in *L'Épaulette*. The humanisation of the enemy and the dual Franco-Prussian identity of Jean's family give a multi-faceted perspective to the narration; many different opinions, including that of the official national enemy, are filtered through to the reader via the voice of Jean.

Raubvogel, in contrast to Karl, who claims to be related to Jean's family through his Prussian grandmother, is presented as suspicious, money-loving and false.<sup>30</sup> It is even in doubt whether he is related to Jean's family at all. Raubvogel's false nature is evident in his attitude towards patriotism. He wishes to set up model communities in Algeria, for which he needs funding:

Le cousin Raubvogel qui, ainsi que sa femme, se montre charmant pour mon père et pour moi, ne pouvait rester indifférent aux souffrances de ses compatriotes; surtout de ceux qui ont opté pour la France sans avoir eu la précaution, auparavant, de faire des opérations

<sup>29</sup> Redfern, p.105.

<sup>30</sup> Redfern notes that even Raubvogel's name gives him away, as it means 'bird of prey'. In a similar vein, Raubvogel's partner in his criminal activity is Lügner, which means 'liar', (Redfern, p.103). It is also significant that Raubvogel's first name is Gottlieb, the same name that Darien went on to use a few years later for his German swindler living in London. The name literally means 'God lover/beloved' and Krumm means 'crooked'.

pendant la guerre. Il a pris un petit accent alsacien qu'il n'avait pas lorsque nous eûmes le plaisir de le voir pour la première fois; flatterie délicate. [...] Après une grande fête spéciale, au cours de laquelle Raubvogel fait un discours vibrant le plus pur patriotisme, et où sa femme apparaît, vêtue en Alsacienne, au bras du ministre de la Guerre, les émigrés partent pour la terre promise (Voleurs, p.698).

This passage is revealing of Darien's view of the manipulation of national identity. Here the reader is aware of Raubvogel's false patriotism but also of the acceptance others display towards this patriotism. Darien takes similar markers of identity to those used by Barrès to denote nationality, costume and language, and presents them not as true markers of national character but rather as superficial elements of appearance which can be manipulated to promote a sense of inclusion. Whereas Barrès used Asmus's dress and manners to construct his character as a German, Darien undermines this process through the character of Raubvogel. It is clear that Darien did not believe that cultural products such as accent or dress were always genuinely indicative of national identity, but were open to manipulation for economic profit and social self-promotion. The character of Raubvogel demonstrates that Darien wished to present a varied picture of foreigners, which was not dependent on their appearance or mannerisms, but rather on their character and sincerity.

### **Undermining the Symbols of National Identity**

As we have seen in other Darien novels, although he used humour effectively to mock hypocrisy and pride, he also sought to create pathos and sympathy through the connection he constructed between his narrator and the reader. Whereas Barrès attempted to manipulate patriotic sentiment in the reader through the use of symbolic events and characters, Darien is critical of this type of story-telling and in

*L'Épaulette* demonstrates its effect on Jean as a young boy. Not only does Jean hear war stories from Gabarrot, but he is also an avid reader of the newspapers, which through much of the war predict a French victory:

Notre flotte doit bombarder et ruiner à jamais les villes du littoral allemand, de Hambourg à Danzig. Il faut, en effet, que nous apportions aux barbares teutons la civilisation qui leur manque. Tout cela est très beau, certainement; mais ce n'est pas ce que j'aimerais à voir dans les journaux. Je voudrais y lire des récits terribles et détaillés de luttes sanglantes, de combats sans merci, des anecdotes amusantes et tragiques, des histoires d'armées entières s'évanouissant à la simple approche du drapeau tricolore, s'effondrant sous le feu des canons français; des choses, enfin, comme le colonel Gabarrot m'en décrivait autrefois (Voleurs, p.664).

The first sentence of this passage is reminiscent of the kind of language that Barrès used in *Colette Baudoche* to depict the cultural conflict between the two nations; there is talk of the civilising effect of the conflict and the term 'barbares' is even used in reference to the Prussians. Darien believed this kind of ideological rhetoric removed the reality of war from the reader, leading to a false image of the true events.<sup>31</sup> There is a comparison in *L'Épaulette* between the fictional presentation of war, as in the passage above, and the true reality of conflict. As a young boy who believes his country is winning the war, Jean is keen to hear bloody stories of the battles; he wants to hear 'récits', 'anecdotes', 'histoires', all types of fiction. It is not until the newspapers have to admit to certain military losses that the reality of defeat dawns on Jean and he asks for some information about his father, who is away fighting, from three elderly Republicans who blame the Emperor for the defeat:

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<sup>31</sup> In *La Belle France*, Darien discusses the way the press catered to the whims of the readership rather than attempting to educate or inform them: 'Si la Presse, au lieu d'éclairer le peuple, l'abrutit, on peut dire que la diffusion de l'instruction n'a pas donné de résultats plus heureux. La Presse s'adresse, à part quelques rares exceptions, à un peuple d'esclaves, d'esclaves volontaires, fiers d'une liberté imaginaire, et inconscients de leur réelle servitude; l'instruction, telle qu'elle est comprise et pratiquée en France, produit, manufacture ce peuple d'esclaves.' (Voleurs, p.1310) Here Darien clearly linked the failures of the education system to the failures of the press, as he believed both were products of a people enslaved by the lies of the ruling classes. The revelation of the truth was central to Darien's approach to politics and to writing, therefore the false patriotism of the press is portrayed as another form of obscuring the truth from the individual.



- Mince de rigolade! ricane Albert. L'autre jour, en lisant le compte rendu de la bataille de Gravelotte, je me tenais les côtes. C'est tordant!

Moi, les comptes rendus des batailles ne me font pas rire. J'ai même un pressentiment que mon père y a été blessé ou tué, à cette bataille de Gravelotte qui fait tant rire Albert. Pourquoi rit-il d'une bataille, celui-là? Les batailles ne les font pas rire, ceux qui se sont battus! Pourquoi ne vont-ils pas se battre, ceux-là? Qu'est-ce qu'ils font là, ce Léon, ce Petit-Gris, et cet Albert, qui vident ici des bouteilles à l'ombre, tandis que les bouches des canons, là-bas, vomissent du feu sous le soleil? (Voleurs, p.667).

When there is a possibility that the war will directly affect his family, Jean is less keen to hear inflated or dramatic accounts of battles and more interested in the truth of the situation. As the reality of war threatens to enter the text, the reader is reminded of the brutality of battle. Darien sought to expose the brutality of military life from a different perspective to that of the imprisoned soldiers in *Biribi*. The grim reality of war and the dehumanising effect of the military system which are presented in *Biribi* are not present in *L'Épaulette*. Jean is only aware of the events of the conflict through snatched conversations with adults and through the biased reporting of the press. Whereas the narrator of *Biribi*, Jean Froissard, relates the brutality of the army to the reader directly from the time and place of the experience in a quasi-confessional form of writing, the other Jean, the young narrator of *L'Épaulette*, is spatially and temporally removed from the action. He only has access to second-hand information which has been filtered through the opinions of others. In *L'Épaulette*, therefore, Darien goes beyond *Biribi*'s graphic depiction of military life to criticise the rhetoric and culture which surrounds and supports the status of the army. It is the method of the army's self-promotion and self-glorification which Darien is depicting in this novel, and that includes the press's patriotism and the political dogma of characters. The antimilitarist theories which he had developed with McCabe during his time in London enter into the text not by means of persuasive didactic prose, but through the voice of a distressed child.

Not only does the above exchange between the child and the republicans reveal Darien's opinion about the manipulative nature of political rhetoric, but it demonstrates further his belief that organised politics blinds people to the reality of France's defeat at the hands of the Prussian army. Jean seeks information on the war in four different places: with Colonel Gabarrot, with Karl, in the papers, and with the group of Republicans. It is significant that the only sincere voice amongst this collection is that of the Prussian. Just as the Republicans' views of the events are coloured by their politics, so too is the newspapers' portrayal of the war filtered through nationalist rhetoric which is, according to Darien, a form of misinformation which manipulates the child-narrator. It has, therefore, elements of the fictional in its inflammatory and exaggerated style. The truth, as perceived by Darien, cannot be found in the papers or in patriotic or political rhetoric, but in the voice of the outsider. This is one of the main issues which differentiates Darien's view of national identity from that of Barrès: the individual's search for truth, as opposed to the presentation of the collective identity of the nation as defined by mythologized symbols. Barrès was attempting to manufacture a version of people or events which correlated with his ideological viewpoint, while Darien attempted to portray reality as experienced by one individual. The same could be argued of their fictional depiction of national identity. Barrès wished to create a sense of collective national identity through the manipulation of potent symbols and the typification of characters to suit his ideological agenda; Darien again focused on the individual's perspective. Through this perspective, the hypocrisy of nationalist rhetoric is

revealed and the reader is once again required by Darien to empathize with the outsider.

There is a striking parallel between the closing scenes of *Colette Baudouche* and *L'Épaulette* which illustrates Darien's promotion of the individual and Barrès's belief in collective national identity. As we saw, Colette and Asmus attend a memorial service for the soldiers who served in the Franco-Prussian War and it is at this service that the young girl feels a sense of communion with her compatriots and through which Barrès conveyed his theory of the national sense of self. *L'Épaulette*, too, closes with a ceremony to commemorate the soldiers of this conflict with a bronze statue of Jean's father. In stark contrast to Colette's connection to her nation and her countrymen through transforming power of the religious and nationalist symbolism, Jean is portrayed as the observer, the outsider, who feels no connection to the symbolic significance of the ceremony and only feels contempt for it:

Les personnages officiels sont arrivés. Un banquet a eu lieu, au cours duquel on a porté beaucoup de toasts à beaucoup de choses. Et maintenant, en présence de notabilités de tout ordre, au son des instruments de musiques locales, les toiles qui masquaient le monument viennent de tomber. Sous les rayons d'un soleil aveuglant, le bronze apparaît dans toute son horreur. Vous connaissez la statue. C'est la même que les autres. On en a mis partout. Une grande question, j'ai oublié de vous le dire, s'était posée devant l'esprit patriotique du Comité qui prit l'initiative de l'érection du monument: représenterait-on mon père en uniforme de colonel, ou en uniforme de général? [...] Le sculpteur, homme de génie original, et qu'on va décorer, a osé représenter mon père tête nue. Voilà de la hardiesse; tout le monde loue l'audace du sculpteur. En France, on aime l'audace... La chaleur est étouffante. Pas d'air, pas un souffle de vent. Au loin, l'orage gronde... Et la longue série des discours va commencer. Une grande lassitude s'est emparée en moi; je ne me sens pas bien; ah! que je voudrais que tout cela fût terminé!... Courbassol, ministre de la Justice, qui représente le gouvernement, prend la parole (Voleurs, p.919).

There are many examples of anonymous figures in this passage. There are 'personnages officiels', 'notabilités', '[le] Comité', the crowd is described as 'tout le monde' and the subject of many verbs is 'on'. The collective actions of this 'on' that are described here are vague: 'on a porté beaucoup de toasts à beaucoup de choses';

'[o]n en a mis partout'; '[e]n France, on aime l'audace'. There are also many images of representative objects here. The statue stands to represent Jean's father, and the valour of the army; many people are there in their official capacity; Courbassol is representing the government. However, the combination of symbolism and collective identity does not create the harmony that Barrès attempted to portray in *Colette*, but is rather portrayed as a sham. The disillusioned voice of the narrator saps the symbols of their power: '[v]ous connaissez la statue. C'est la même que les autres.' The critical gaze of the narrator, as he colludes with the reader against those who are partaking in the ceremony, isolates both from the collective sense of identity and undermines the symbolic power of the statue and the ceremony. Instead of a sense of belonging, this ceremony creates uneasiness in Jean and provokes his bitterness.

Jean's isolation is compounded as the scene ends and he comes to a realisation as a storm begins to rage:

Elle est vide tout d'un coup, cette place. Ç'a été une fuite soudaine, une débandade, un sauve-qui-peut. Foule, pompiers, fonctionnaires, musiciens, orateur ont disparu. Un torrent, que grossit la pluie diluvienne, cache le pavé, vient écumer les murs. Aux fenêtres vite fermées pendent les restes des guirlandes et des lampions, des guenilles qui furent les drapeaux. Et derrière les vitres de ces fenêtres, partout en haut, en bas, j'aperçois des visages blafards – des bouches ouvertes, comme hébétées par l'inattendu qui termina la fête lamentable, des yeux fixés sur la statue... La statue; le simulacre qui regarde ces figures-là; qui les regarde, le front haut, fier, dans une pose de défi; dans une pose de défi que je comprends, tout d'un coup. Et je les contemple, plein d'une amertume désespérée – face à face, séparés par le verre qui fait trembler la foudre, le peuple souverain, Blague de chair, et la statue, Mensonge de bronze... (Voleurs, p.921).

As the gathered crowd runs for cover from the weather it becomes clear to Jean, and by extension to the reader, that their collective identity is shallow. It is a case of every man and woman for himself or herself. Their symbolic selves run for cover, '[f]oule, pompiers, fonctionnaires, musiciens, orateur ont disparu', and are

transformed into fearful faces behind windowpanes. The weakness of humanity escaping from the elements and the defiance of the statue as it is rooted to the spot reveals the false nature of the symbolic connection between the people and its national symbols. The statue's heroic pose does not correlate with the weakness of the nation it is supposed to represent; after all, this is a statue commemorating a crushing military defeat.<sup>32</sup>

The very last sentence of *L'Épaulette* demonstrates Darien's contempt for the mythologizing of national symbols, figureheads and collective identity: the *peuple* are a joke and the statue is a lie. Any symbolic resonance with which such markers of national identity are endowed is false and easily undermined. Whereas Barrès sought to draw on a series of national symbols in *Colette* with which to tell his parable of national identity, Darien sought to reveal the true nature of such symbols: he saw them as lies and vehicles through which the government sought to manipulate the crowd. The perspective of the narrator is important to the representation of national identity in the work of both Barrès and Darien. The function of Barrès's omnipresent narrator is to see the typified national characteristics of Colette or Asmus and bring them to the attention of the reader. The confined perspective of Jean in *L'Épaulette*, as his narrator's voice exists in the

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<sup>32</sup> Earlier in the scene, the narrator comments on this risible action of celebrating defeat in a typically ironic tone: '[e]t j'ai une vision, tout d'un coup: un champ de bataille immense, couvert de blessés qui râlent, de morts; c'est la nuit. Et l'aube verdit; rougeoie; et des tambours battent; et des tocsins sonnent à des beffrois; et les blessés se lèvent; et les morts se lèvent; et les blessés et les morts s'élancent, derrière un homme qui tient un drapeau rouge; et puis, il n'y que feu, partout; et puis... Nous n'avons pas été vaincus!' Darien also discussed this irrational treatment of defeat in the opening paragraphs of *La Belle France*, which illustrate more clearly his position: '[c]'est une chose laide, un vaincu. [...] Ce n'est pas ainsi qu'on raisonne en France, je le sais. Là, le vaincu est honoré, glorifié,

present tense and grows from boy to man, undermines any process of typification; because the narration is performed by a single character who can only describe that which he experiences, and therefore is much more personal. While Jean attempts to reveal the truth of life as he experiences it, the Barrèsian narrator attempts to mythologize and typify the events he describes and the characters he encounters. It is not just the stereotyping of nationalities which Darien sought to undermine in this novel through the representation of characters such as Karl, but also the manner in which national identity is expressed. It is the method of story-telling (by the press, by the republicans, by old soldiers) and the manipulation of symbols (the statue, the flag) which Darien also attacks. His confessional, personal style of narration and the revelatory purpose of his writing make for a piece of fiction which promotes the cause of the individual while exposing the manipulative nature of national symbols. The depiction of nationhood and national identity in both *Colette Baudoche* and *L'Épaulette* is largely dependent on the status and identity of the individual in the ideology of Barrès and of Darien. While Barrès saw the worth of the individual in his or her connection to a larger self, to the nation, Darien wished to express his belief that such notions of collective identity only served to rob the individual of his or her liberty.

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choyé, tenu en haute estime. C'est à vrai dire, le type le plus accompli, le plus parfait, la plus digne expression de l'humanité' (Voleurs, p.1162).

### Conclusion

Ultimately, both Barrès and Darien distanced themselves from anarchism. Maurice Barrès admired its energy and activism but dismissed its violence and rejected the individualism which informed much of anarchism's discourse. As his ideology developed, from Boulangist to socialist, to anti-Dreyfusard, to nationalist, his status as an author grew within the literary realm. Georges Darien, while remaining a passionate supporter of the individual's liberty for the duration of his career, detached himself from many of his anarchist associates of the late 1880s and early 1890s. His time in exile in London and Belgium saw him become involved with a succession of political groups, from the L'Association Antimilitariste Internationale des Travailleurs, to the Union syndicale des Artistes dramatiques, to the Ligue pour l'impôt unique. As his politics become more fractured and less focused, Darien's status as a writer within the literary field became more isolated. As the end of their lives, the contrast between the two writers is stark. While Barrès was a national figure, an *immortel*, who embodied the nationalist cause at the time of his death, Darien died virtually unknown and penniless, save for a few sympathetic articles in reviews such as *Le Cri du peuple*.

However, a posthumous reversal of fortunes has occurred. The causes of Barrès's success during his lifetime (his networking, his sermonizing texts, his nationalism) are unpalatable for today's readers. On the other hand, Darien's fractured parables of isolation and his passion for the individual are far more attractive. He is called 'le maudit' by an admiring André Breton, 'une des plus

rebelles': the rebellious Darien is a more appealing figure than the respectable Barrès.<sup>1</sup>

The examination of the status of these two writers in the *champ littéraire* has been a fundamental part of an examination of their works. I have, as Julian Barnes puts it in *Flaubert's Parrot*, 'disobediently' pursued the writers alongside their fiction. This pursuit has led to an understanding of the relationship between the construction of narrative, the ideology of the author and his status in the literary field. These three elements are intrinsically linked in the works of both Barrès and Darien. For this reason, and despite their ideological differences, a comparative study of their fiction has revealed much concerning the composition of the narrative (the voice of the narrator, methods of characterisation and the process of authenticating the texts in particular) and the purpose which motivated the composition.

Barres's writing and his politics were inextricably bound together through a philosophical discourse of destiny, collectivism and *le moi*: 'Ma littérature et ma politique devaient correspondre, se compléter, s'harmoniser puisque j'avais de l'une et à l'autre sans le vouloir, d'un élan fatal' (Cahiers, p.18). He encoded his political programme into his texts by means of the direct intervention of his narrator into the narratives. This method of narration developed in parallel with his ideology. During the early part of his career, leading up to the publication of *Sous l'œil des barbares* in 1888, Barrès was a journalist for *La Cocarde* and an active supporter of General Boulanger. Although Boulanger's policies were vague and rarely defined by the General, Barrès's own politics were developing into a kind of metaphysical socialism, as his first trilogy *Le Culte du moi*

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<sup>1</sup> Breton, p.5.



demonstrates. His theory of the *moi*, a collective sense of self which was rooted in family and regional culture, led Barrès to create narrators who intervene in the text, directing the gaze of the reader and constructing sections of didactic argument in support of his theory. In 1897, he wrote that his 'thèse' for *Un Homme libre* was 'individualisme et solidarité' (Cahiers, p.90). Therefore, Barrès was creating a *roman à thèse* which presented its reader with a political message through a realistic narrative punctuated with didactic argument. Susan Suleiman has pinpointed *Les Déracinés* as the example of this method in Barrès's œuvre. I have expanded this argument through my analysis of his earlier works to show that Barrès began using this method in *L'Ennemi des lois* and *Le Culte du moi*.

While his project of educating the reader is evident in the fiction Barrès produced in the late 1880s and early 1890s, his methods developed in *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale*. *Les Déracinés* not only provides both negative and positive exemplary apprenticeships in the form of Sturel *et al* who demonstrate the consequences of their uprooting from Lorraine, but also Barrès widened this lesson for his reader into a lesson for the nation. *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale* is a parable of the state of the nation. He believed his second trilogy was destined to show the corrupt nature of the Republic and the fractured statue of the nation: 'j'ai montré la France dissociée et décérébrée. Dissociée, c'est son état. Je l'ai fait voir en peignant les Reinach et les Portalis. Décérébrée, un Bouteiller qui pouvait, qui devrait être son cerveau incline vers ces canailles parlementaires Reinach et Portalis' (Cahiers, p.91). Barrès was creating a mythologized version of the Third Republic, uprooted and fractured, through the tale of his young men from Lorraine.

Barrès's methods of transforming his stories into political parables are also evident in *L'Appel au soldat* and *Leurs figures*. General Boulanger is transfigured from the weak and indecisive man he was into an energetic, heroic figure. While Boulanger brims with vitality, Reinach is found guilty of his crimes and of his race as Barrès combined anti-Semitism with the Bergsonian *élan vital* to construct his nationalist discourse. His nationalism evolved further in *Les Bastions de l'est* as he turned his attention more fully towards the occupied Alsace-Lorraine provinces. Barrès manipulated character, narration and plot in this novel to form a tightly constructed, stylised version of Metz under German occupation. Through the stereotypical elements of the relationship between the young French heroine and Asmus, the German visitor, Barrès exchanged emotion for symbolism. National identity is encoded with layers of symbols from Colette herself (the virgin representative of Lorraine), to the elegant style of the French compared to the clumsy appearance of the Germans, to the closing scenes of the memorial service for those who died in the Franco-Prussian War. This service synthesises religious experience with nationalist fervour to create a scene where Colette rejects her lover in favour of her nation.

Throughout this novel it is again the narrator who both constructs and undermines the relationship between Colette and Asmus, all the while directing the reader to see the German's flaws and the ideological conflict which is embodied in his interest in Colette. The construction of the narrator who interposes into the text evolved further in *Colette Baudoche*. As we have seen, the texts of *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale* and *Le Culte du moi* were parables which mythologized French national identity into a collective self, rooted in the culture and history of the nation. *Colette Baudoche* is an extension of this sense

of collectivism as national identity was again mythologized by the author's use of symbolism and religious ceremony.

Parallel to the development of his narrators as guides and instructors of the reader, Barrès was growing in stature and status as a writer. I have argued that his ascendancy through the hierarchies of the *champ littéraire* is reflected in his fiction. The narrator who seeks to educate his readers has a sense of authority as he directs and intervenes in the text. He is in control of the story, while remaining separate from it as he manipulates character and plot to serve his own political ends. The voice of the narrator is the voice of Barrès who sought to instruct his readers and validate his political opinions. As he joined salons and the Académie Française, not only was Barrès's political career consolidated, but he developed his literary techniques to reflect the authority he believed he possessed.

I have argued that Darien's method of narration is likewise a reflection of his politics and his status as a writer. His use of the first person and the present tense in the narration of his fiction closes the gap not only between narrator and reader, but also between author and narrator. The first novel Darien wrote, *Biribi*, established this unity between narrator and author as Darien proclaimed this work 'a été vécu'. The similarities between his own experiences in the military discipline camp and those Jean Froissard relates to the reader in the novel, combined with the detailed descriptions of people and events, lend the text a strong sense of reality. I have argued that Darien flattened the distance between author, narrator and reader in order to relay his political message in a more effective way. In contrast to Barrès's drawn-out, sermon-like arguments inserted into the text, Darien chose to describe the brutality which he claimed he had been

witness to in startling, powerful scenes. *Biribi* is not a piece of anti-militarist pamphleteering, but a structured narrative through which Darien aimed to testify to his own experiences.

In *Bas les cœurs!* Darien also developed a level of confidence between reader and narrator, as the young Jean Barbier confides in and colludes with us during the story. However, the immediacy and intimacy which was evident in *Biribi* gives way to irony in an observation of the manners and hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie of the Third Republic. The text is set during the period of the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune and this too increases the distance between author, narrator and reader. Just as Barrès sought to educate the reader through the exemplary models of *Les Déracinés*, Darien also sought to instruct his readers through the perspective of a youth. While Barrès attempted to demonstrate the uprooted state of the French nation, Darien wanted to show nationalism and republicanism as hypocritical, shallow and a sham. While Barrès used symbolism and ceremony to underline the legitimacy of his nationalism, Darien used national symbols to undermine this belief.

Darien's fictional version of crime and corruption, *Le Voleur*, again blurred the line between author and narrator. In his preface to the novel, Darien claimed he had stolen the manuscript from a hotel room; the writer became a thief and the thief became a writer. *Le Voleur* is a self-consciously fictional text that has elements of the real. Darien uses various methods (including melodrama, farce and parody) in order to remind the reader continually that the text is a piece of fictional writing. However, Darien combines the narration's self-awareness with pathos and the self-doubt of his narrator, Randal. In so doing, Randal becomes a nuanced and convincing observer of his fellow characters, certainly

more convincing than many of the characters constructed by Barrès. Randal's identity as a thief becomes part of a larger challenge to legitimate authority; his status is that of an individual who struggles with the authority that the society of the Third Republic seems to have over him. Barrès sought to convince the reader of the authority of his version of historical events and figures in *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale* (and the validity of his political and ideological agenda). However, *Le Voleur* is a more personal account of the struggle between the individual and society and a more persuasive rendering of this dynamic.

In his fiction, Darien continually returned to marginalised figures who were in some way excluded from or oppressed by legitimate authority: the prisoner; the disillusioned young man; the thief; the foreigner. His touchstones were the marginalised individual, the hypocrisy of nationalism and republicanism, and the rejection of the myth of the military glory of France. This empathy with excluded characters, making them his mouthpieces, was a result of his belief in the supremacy of the individual's liberty above all else. His narrator-characters serve as agents for his individualism. They also reflect his status as a writer. As we have seen, during his lifetime Darien was neither commercially successful nor critically acclaimed. The exclusion he felt as a writer (precipitated by bad reviews, difficulties in getting works published, and his exile in London) is fictionalised in the voices of Jean Froissard, Jean Barbier, Randal, Gottlieb Krumm and others. While Barrès attempted to bring a sense of legitimate authority to his narrator's voice and his identity as a writer, Darien chose to challenge this authority through narratives which championed the cause of the individual. He refused to operate within those hierarchies that consecrated writers and set the limits of the *champ littéraire* during this period. While Barrès

was 'blessed' by salons and academies, Darien was, as André Breton wrote in 1955, 'le maudit'.

Despite their different status, their contrasting narrative methods and their conflicting ideologies, the roots of fundamental parts of Barrès's and Darien's purposes in writing can be found in their reactions to anarchism. Through their interaction with the anarchist press of the period (Darien writing for *L'Endehors* and Barrès interviewing Grave and producing articles for *La Plume* in which anarchist journalists also published articles), both writers developed an admiration for activism and energy. This was expressed in two significant ways. Firstly, the characterisation in the texts favours men of action: Barrès praised Napoleon for his energy and Boulanger for his vitality; the frustration of Jean Froissard is born out of his inability to act as he wished, while Randal is easily able to outwit the wealthy, greedy bourgeoisie from whom he steals. Secondly, the activism of Barrès and Darien demanded both of them to produce works which would promote various political causes, from Boulangism to Georgism. Barrès's organic *racinement* in his collective *moi* demanded energy and action as the mythologizing of his family (and of himself) created a sense of a destiny which had to be fulfilled. Barrès's motivation to write, therefore, was to achieve greatness and leave a cultural heritage for posterity. This demand for action can also be identified in Darien's brand of anarchism. His support of protest and revolt, action in the face of the Third Republic's inertia, is evident in his fiction and his journalism. Although Darien did not transform this into propaganda by the deed (except, perhaps, by throwing a stink bomb in the Opéra Comique), his

persistence in writing in the face of his many struggles as a writer demonstrates his commitment to his activism.<sup>2</sup>

However, the response of Barrès and Darien to the conflict between the authority of the individual and that of collective society determined the form and function of much of their work, and also their fates as writers. While Darien was actively engaged in the process of writing to testify to the experiences of the marginalised, he distanced himself from the literary field and disengaged himself from many political groups. He created distance between himself and the network of the *champ littéraire* through a combination of a difficult personality and the lack of commercial viability of his works. His individualism drove him to disengage from the many political groups which he affiliated himself with over the course of his life. Arguably, Darien was willing himself to remain isolated, and his works were destined to fail as commercial ventures. In contrast to Darien, Barrès networked and created the persona of the 'professeur d'énergie', striving to engage in the political realm through his journalism and his election to the Chamber of Deputies in 1889. If Darien willed himself to remain an isolated individual, Barrès desired to be a significant part of the collective *moi* of France. He wished to guide the youth to remain rooted in their culture and mythologized himself, his family and other significant figures (such as Boulanger), transfiguring them into spiritualised, authoritative versions of themselves. Barrès was the committed writer. He was committed to presenting his collectivism, his nationalism and his anti-Semitism through his fiction. He was committed to engaging with the political sphere and to interacting with the *champ littéraire* in order to become the 'maître' of many. Darien, however, was the wilfully

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<sup>2</sup> Darien threw the stink bomb during a performance in 1910. The incident is recalled by Stock in his *Mémoire d'un éditeur*.

disengaged. He was not cursed by others to remain isolated and exiled but, because of his dedication to his individualism, he cursed himself.



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